SERMONS

BY THE LATE

REV. JOHN JAMES WEITBRECHT,

MISSIONARY OF THE

C. M. S. AT BURDWAN.

SHORT MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR PREFIXED.

"I PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED."

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PREFACE.

THE sermons which are now presented to the Christian public in India, were composed and delivered in this country; and are suitable in length, and in the selection of the subjects, for those who are residing here; and especially, for those in retired localities, many of whom are without the privilege of a living preacher, or the enjoyment of the public ordinances of religion. To individuals and families so situated, it is hoped these sermons may prove a spiritual blessing.

There is a freshness and simplicity, as well as a certain kind of originality about the style, and a heavenly unction diffused through the matter, of these unpretending discourses, which have been thought and felt by many to give them a peculiar charm; and which probably led to the repeated expression of a

wish, from time to time, from numerous individuals, that a volume of them might appear in print.

In compliance with this wish, and in the humble hope, that he who composed them, though he be now dead, may yet speak through them, to the glory of God; they are sent forth with earnest prayer for the Divine blessing upon their publication.

Burdwan, Oct. 2nd, 1852.

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ERRATA.

Page 91, line 16, *for* Teacher, *read* Searcher.
,, 267, line 2, from bottom, *for* Improve, *read* Accept.
,, 284, line 4, from top, *for* to them !—all, *read* to them all !—

MEMOIR

OF THE LATE

REV. JOHN JAMES WEITBRECHT.

THE word of eternal truth declares that "the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance," and it is one of the Christian's delightful employments to mark the operations of Divine grace as manifested in the dispositions and lives of God's dear servants. A sweet and profitable solemnity pervades the mind, whilst retracing the history of those who have escaped to bliss before us, and who we now believe to be enjoying the uninterrupted happiness of the heavenly state. The contemplation of these things animates the soul, and fills it with hopeful anticipation in reference to that day, when the glory of the Lord shall be revealed in the assembling of all His children together, never more to be dispersed again.

We need to indulge a little in meditations of this character, to soothe and sustain our mourn-

NOTE.—A great part of this Memoir was prepared for, and published in the *Calcutta Christian Intelligencer*. It is however made more full, and is slightly altered in its arrangement, in the present volume.

ing spirits, when God in His all-wise Providence makes a sudden and unexpected breach, among the little band of His earnest and devoted labourers in this heathen land, for it is a severe trial of our faith to behold a zealous fellow-worker, in whose society we enjoyed delightful intercourse, for whose activity and love we saw reason to be thankful, and in whose wisdom and well-directed influence, we felt the utmost confidence, cut down at a stroke, and removed from his place amongst us—that place which according to our short-sighted vision no one else is so well calculated to fill. It is true the Great Master knows it better than we do, and He is only fulfilling some wise though hidden purposes of His grace towards fallen mankind, when He raises up an instrument, tunes it to play very skilfully, and just when it seems most pleasant in its sound, and best fitted to delight *us*, and to do Him glorious service, removes it, saying "Father, I will that he also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that he may behold my glory."

Such an instrument was the beloved brother and devoted Missionary, whose sudden removal from his work below to his reward above, has touched so many hearts with sorrow. John James Weitbrecht was a native of Schoendorf, a small provincial town in the little kingdom of Wür-

temberg, in the south of Germany; where he was born, April 29th, 1802. He was one of seven brothers who grew up to manhood, five of whom are still living. He was not educated for the Church, but received a thoroughly sound and classical education, and what is of still more importance, he was trained up in the fear of God, who was pleased to touch his heart effectually by the power of His grace, when he was about seventeen years old.

In obedience to the wishes of his father he entered on secular business after his education was completed, and remained so engaged for several years, which eventually proved a most suitable preparation for that practical usefulness, for which he became so remarkable in his future course.

The particular circumstances which led him to desire to become a Missionary are not exactly known, but he frequently said that his family and friends dissuaded him strongly from his purpose, deeming him possessed of too fair prospects, at home, and too much respectability of family and connexions, to think of devoting himself to the work of a Missionary, which was then considered as an employment only suited to the humbler classes of pious persons. He, however, was enabled to be stedfast in his determination; and as his

father had died, he felt himself free to follow the bent of his mind, and proceeded to Basle, in Switzerland, to offer himself as a student, in the Missionary College there.

The following letter from a contemporary, who met him there, will shew his progress at this period of his life:—

"We were first introduced to each other on the 4th of January, 1826, the day I arrived in the Mission-House at Basle. He had reached Basle a few weeks before me. As to seniority, he was the second of twelve students, who entered the Mission College at one and the same time (three have gone before him; one in West Africa, one in North India, and one in South India). His proficiency in Latin on entering the College placed him at once in the first division of our class, and in the course of the second year, I believe, he joined the theological class, being matriculated in the Basle University, where we, as the custom was, had to attend some theological lectures, and were required to be present at the time of the general examinations. His deep and unaffected piety, his open, straightforward, cheerful, social, and affable character, and his active habits, made him a general favourite with all with whom he became acquainted; and not only that, many of the students looked up to

him as a pattern of a Christian and a true Missionary candidate. He was diligent and most conscientious in all his studies, and gave great satisfaction to his tutors, all of whom loved and respected him greatly. In the long dreary winter he would get up long before day, and read with one of his fellow-students the New Testament in Greek, and see that all the rooms were properly heated before the rest of the inmates rose. He was always ready for any service for the good of his fellow-men, whether it was of a temporal or spiritual nature; always the foremost when work was to be done, whether mental or manual; for in Basle, the hours of recreation were chiefly employed in the work-shop, in the wood-yard, and in the garden.

"He soon became the leader and instructor of a band of young men in the town, who met together for mutual edification and prayer. Besides, he would frequently preside (though it was not his turn) at a weekly religious meeting in the town, which was in charge of the junior tutors and the senior students of the Missionary College; would hold early morning prayers in the town-prison, and take classes (likewise in the prison) in Sunday Schools; and after being licensed to preach, he would embrace every opportunity of publicly declaring the Gospel of salvation

in various country churches in the Canton of Basle, and the neighbouring places of the Grand Duchy of Baden. As both the Principal and the tutors of the Missionary Institution, as well as the members of the Committee, considered him mature (almost before the time), both in character and attainments, he was sent to England much before the usual period (I believe it was in 1829), carrying with him the highest testimonials from the Divinity Professor of the University and the Principal of the Mission College, both as to his Christian character and mental attainments. In England, he appears to have made the best use of his time; for I have heard, that both the Bishop of London and the Examining Chaplain were highly pleased with his examination previous to his taking orders."

The Church Missionary Society, both on account of his mature character, and his facility in learning languages, &c., intended sending him to Abyssinia; but for some reason or other his destination was changed, and he was sent to India.

He left England in September, 1830, and arrived in Calcutta in January, 1831; so that at the time of his removal he had been upwards of twenty-one years a Missionary to the Heathen.

The following short extracts from a journal

which he kept on the voyage to India will exemplify the truly spiritual character of his mind, even at that early period of his career.

"*August 27th*, 1829. At 6 A. M. I had the last parting meeting with the Missionary brethren at Islington, I addressed them with deep feeling, and was reminded of the great blessing of brotherly fellowship. At 2 P. M. I took leave of Mr. Coates, brother Raban offered a short prayer commending me to the grace of God, and beseeching that I might become an instrument in the hand of the Lord, of conveying blessings to many immortal souls.

"*29th.*—On shore on Sunday waiting for wind, I was favoured to hear a beautiful sermon from Heb. iv. The eternal rest—I was truly comforted, and received fresh encouragement for my pilgrimage. In the evening I was on board, meditating on the mercies I had enjoyed in England, and felt that many dear friends and brethren were lifting up their hearts for me: I felt something of the communion of saints, and poured out my heart before the Lord for them. May I be enabled to keep fast hold of God's promises. A child of God, who is not of the world, and desires to deny it for the Lord's sake, must have this privilege continually present to his mind, or he is in a miserable state.

"*Sept.* 10*th.*—I had an interesting conversation with an officer about true conversion and the Divine authority of the Scriptures. I saw from the effects of it that the natural man may be convinced by arguments, but unless divine grace bring them home to the heart, no sinner will be converted by them. It requires watchfulness and prayer, to behave properly with regard to the passengers. To show kindness and courtesy is the Christian's duty, but he must learn from his divine Master not to commit himself to men, when he knows what is in them, i. e. enmity against the truth.

"12*th.*—This was a dreadful night—the wind blew terribly—the sea ran mountains high. I durst not attempt divine service to-day. A sea-life without a Saviour must be a wretched state—more so than on land. I lay on my cot thinking how comfortable it is that the Lord hears the inward prayer of a heart hungering after grace, when it cannot come to Him in the retirement of the closet, to pour out its desires in words.

"15*th.*—Very dreadful weather, but I enjoyed much comfort. The remembrance of my dear friends in Germany, Switzerland, and England, many of whom are no doubt pleading with the Lord on my behalf, was very sweet and delightful to my heart, in these hours of trial, when I want

a brother's comfort very much. Oh, communion of saints, blessed foretaste of Heaven!

"19*th*.—Preached in the cuddy—the Lord gave me liberty and boldness, and I was heard with profound attention—the word seeming to impress many.

"20*th*.—The first fine evening since the beginning of our voyage—the weather mild—the moon in her first quarter—descending towards the west—the sky clear, and the firmament crowded with stars—the air balmy—the wide ocean playing with its waves, and reflecting the moon-beams beautifully—the ship in full sail, plying its course rapidly along, thus causing an action, which produced fine phosphoric sparks, and elevating the mind to admiration of the power and majesty of the great Creator. I sat on deck meditating, wondering, and adoring. I had enjoyed a blessed season in my cabin of communion with my Saviour. My heart was drawn afresh to that land, where after a few days more of earthly toil and sorrow, I shall see Him whom my soul loves, though so feebly, here below.

"24*th*.—Lord have mercy upon me—wherever I turn, unbelief and darkness present themselves. I pity these poor creatures. Strengthen my faith, lest I grow languid. Work *in* me, and make me a faithful fellow-worker.

"27*th*.—Made Madeira. I landed and found Christian friends, with whom I enjoyed most pleasant intercourse. I saw the luxuriance of nature in a warm climate—here the myrtle, the orange and the lime tree blossom—the air is balmy and fragrant—pure and warm. The moon shone brightly and the rich smell from the foliage and flowers, called my mind back to the beauties of Paradise, before sin corrupted man, and brought a curse upon the earth. I preached on Tuesday to many Christian friends, who were called together. I left this beautiful island with regret, where some dear faithful ones are dwelling like roses among the thorns.

"*Oct.* 1*st*.—I read Heber's Last Days, with much interest—how zealous and diligent he was on board a merchant ship from Calcutta to Madras. I do comparatively so little. It is true every opportunity was afforded him—all were ready at his command, and complied with his wishes—he was accomplished and eloquent. I am a foreigner. English is still difficult to me, yet I feel I am not faithful enough, or so holy in my conduct and conversation, as the greatness of my work requires —this thought humbles me to the dust. Heber, as a great bishop, was honoured on every side, and I must expect the contrary, yet this should not quench my zeal or bear heavily on my spirit.

"*3rd.*—Sunday I preached on deck, Matt. xiii. 1—6, under much bodily weakness and much groaning and prayer for divine aid.

"*4th.*—I begin regular study again, and am much upheld by faith. My heart panteth after God: when shall I come and appear before God?

"*6th.*—During the last few days we have had some lovely feathered companions on our voyage —while we skim the ocean, they accompany us in the sky. These are four swallows, who during the day manœuvre round the ship, and catch the flies, and at night settle on the masts, and refresh us with a song. They taught me a lesson: 'Behold the fowls of the air, &c.' they are not anxious for the morrow but are busy to-day, in fulfilling the designs of their Creator, and give Him glory, by being what He meant them to be, and always happy. May I resemble them in this—being awake and diligent in present duties, giving thanks with a joyful heart as I am sailing onward in my heavenly course. I have infinitely more reason to be so than these little birds, and yet how unbelieving, dull, and cold I am. Surely these little creatures have sometimes troubles from storms, and they probably know how to find a hiding place, when gales are approaching. Why should I not willingly bear my share of trial too, and take my refuge to the shadow of those

wings, which offer me shelter and protection, when I feel the heat of tribulation too great? These birds put me to shame. I have had a blessed evening hour—a spiritual supper—a feast of fat things. Jesus was very near. I could love Him ardently and converse with Him, as my friend. Such moments are great gain, and far out-balance all earthly delight. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. I am weak—my Saviour strong, almighty, full of love.

"*9th.*—I was very ill and confined to my couch, exceedingly languid but able to commit my ways unto the Lord. It is sweet thus to realize Jesus' presence—other comfort I have none.

"*15th.*—Thank God I am better, but there seems to be no energy in my constitution. May I possess my soul in patience. I know I am the Lord's, and however sinful and unworthy, He will care for me.

"*23rd.*—I am better and pray that this affliction may be sanctified to my heart, though it causes heaviness to suffer, it is good to bear wholesome chastisement.

"*24th.*—I preached on deck, and was encouraged and inwardly strengthened. The Lord was nigh and afforded to my drooping heart fresh assurance of His grace.

"*Nov.* 14*th.*—I observe with pleasure, something more of religious feeling among the passengers. O Lord, may thy grace abundantly work in their hearts, that a few at least may be won and renewed into thy likeness."

There is reason to believe that this prayer was answered, as, perhaps, more than one still living can testify.

"*Dec.* 25*th, Christmas.*—My heart could realize and rejoice in the truth, that a Saviour has been born for *me*, that He lived and died for *me*; as well as for the salvation of *many*. This glorious truth seems to have acquired fresh cause for thanksgiving, as I meditate on my calling, to convey the gospel of love, to my heathen fellow-creatures. O Lord, dwell in me, that I may become a loud and awakening trumpet, in sounding the message of thy mercy.

"26*th.*—I preached this moring on Job iii. 16. My sermon cost me many a sigh and many a pang. I felt so poor and ignorant whilst preparing it, that doubts began to assail me, as to my missionary calling, and I appeared to myself as a poor culprit led to execution. . There are hours when we can only groan and cry, but they have their beneficial effect, taking us down into the valley of humiliation, where so much salutary truth is learned, which otherwise would

not come home to the heart. Grace dwells in that valley. Help thou me, O Lord, that grace may triumph!

"*Jan. 1st*, 1831.—New year's day. Glory to God! through His grace I have entered on another year. Let me erect my Ebenezer, as I have so much cause to do, in entering on my new sphere of life, and repeat with joyful gratitude, 'Hitherto, the Lord has helped me!'

"How much has thy eternal love done for me even from my early age. How many proofs of thy mercies can I record. How long didst thou follow thy poor lost sheep, until at last it was brought back. How wonderful thy ways and dealings with me, now joys, now sorrows, to draw my heart to Thee. I would to-day dedicate myself afresh to thy service, my Saviour, to be thine altogether, and to desire no other joy, but that which is found in Thee. Thou art worthy, O Lamb of God! Let all my heart adore and praise Thee, for Thy redeeming, dying love.

"*26th.*—This morning the Pilot came on board. I saw Hindus for the first time. How deeply I felt for these poor people. The following day we beheld the shores of India, and my soul adored the Lord.

"*28th.*—We hastened up the river—the shores are beautiful. At 4 P. M. Calcutta presented

itself to our view, and at 6 we cast anchor. The haven is reached in safety, God's name be praised.

"I found my dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Sandys, with the native Christians collected for a prayer-meeting, and I saw some twenty swarthy faces around me, and heard their voices joining in a hymn of praise, to our common Lord and Redeemer.

"*April.*—This morning, Mr. Adam of the L. M. S. died after a short illness of four days. I had but once the pleasure of seeing this noble young man, his missionary zeal made a deep impression on me. He loved his Saviour supremely, and was entirely devoted to His service. After scarcely two years' residence in India, he had tolerably mastered the language, and daily was he seen carrying the message of peace to the heathen around. He perhaps went too far in his zeal, and with his frequent journeyings on foot. Brain fever carried him off at the early age of 27. We attended his funeral, it was an affecting scene, and many tears flowed for the servant of God—

'Who in his youthful prime
Outstepped the bounds of time.'

"*May.*—The Committee have decided on my going to Burdwan. I had for some days lived in imagination elsewhere, among friends I had already learned to love and regard, and the decision

was a sort of disappointment to me; but I can with full acquiescence leave this matter in the Lord's hands, and bow under the light cross, of which this life of trial may have many a heavier one in store."

Burdwan.—Mr. Weitbrecht reached this station on the 11th of June, and expressed himself grateful for the quiet, and the prospect of successful labour on every side, though he painfully missed the intercourse with dear Christian brethren in Calcutta. Trials of another order also awaited him, but they worked in him the peaceable fruits of righteousness. His health too suffered, and he says: "Oh for faith! I want faith, or my bark will soon sink."

"*Jan.* 1832.—Through the Lord's mercy I have been permitted to enter on another year. An important one for me—the first in my service for Christ; among the heathen. I have much to pray for. Much to praise for. Much to ask pardon for. The harvest truly is great but the labourers are few. Lord, give freedom, strength and success. Take my heart and my will, and my life, all to thyself."

After spending an evening with the blessed Corrie, he says: "How refreshing and delightful is the light of grace emanating from true believers, and shedding its bright beams on a sinful genera-

ation. What riches the Lord can put into His own elect, to make them vessels of mercy to their fellow-creatures."

He embraced every opportunity of speaking to the poor people around him on their eternal interests, but felt the want of freedom in the language. He was left, in nine months after his arrival in India, to fulfil all the duties in connection with the mission. English preacher, Pastor of the native flock—superintendent of vernacular schools containing many hundreds of boys, and evangelist to the heathen! Need we wonder to hear him exclaiming: "Who is sufficient for these things?" He calls it, as well he might: "A severe trial of faith. Many duties, many responsibilities, and so little feeling of energy." "My misery," said he, "almost weighed me down, until I had poured out my heart to Jesus with strong crying and tears."

Thus did he in his depression cry mightily to the Lord, and He heard him, and delivered him from all his fears; "he looked unto Him and was lightened." Those who knew Burdwan at this time can testify, how he was in labours most abundant and most efficient too.

"*Jan.* 1*st*, 1833.—My new year's sermons seemed to make a deep impression both on Europeans and the natives, and the Lord blessed His word.

"My dear brethren Leupolt and Knorpp, who

had been with me for a few days left me for Benares. We walked together for some distance, to a spot where their palankeens had been sent forward. The sun was just setting, when we renewed to each other our resolutions to serve the Lord with faithfulness and diligence, and if it pleased Him to bless our labours, to win souls for His kingdom. The tie of brotherly love was more firmly knit. Our vows were solemn, and we were all affected, seeming to realize the presence of angels with us, under the lengthening shadows of the trees. At the entrance to the high road we separated."

Throughout the cold season he itinerated extensively, this was a branch of labour in which he always delighted, and for which he had a peculiar fitness. His bodily and mental activity, readiness of application, and cheerful temper were fully displayed, and he knew how to reach the hearts of his hearers successfully.

"*July* 12*th*.—My spirit longs for help. I am poor and needy. All seemed dark till I could towards evening pour out my heart before Jesus. I then experienced unspeakable comfort. What a mercy that we may make full use of Christ. Oh that spiritual and continual communion with Him were more kept up! There is much danger of losing it, among the manifold cares and many

occupations of a missionary's life. I would daily renew my covenant with my Saviour, that I may daily trust Him with full faith. He will carry me through and preserve me 'faithful unto death,' and after it, to 'receive the crown of life.'

"*Jan.* 1834.—This month was a time of much inward conflict, which ended in thanksgiving to God for His gracious dealings with me in opening my path and leading to a union with a beloved helpmeet. I would gratefully remember the kindness of many friends and their interest in my welfare.

"*April 29th.*—My birth-day, probably the larger half of my life is already spent. How little have I done and suffered for the Lord. Oh for more faithfulness!

"*Oct. 25th.*—On returning home from a village where I had carried the glad tidings, I was met by the sad news of one of my dear young Christians whom I had left very ill, having forsaken his earthly tabernacle. I mourned over him as a father mourns for his son: he was a lovely character on earth, and I rejoice in the midst of sorrow, in the hope of seeing him again among the little band of Hindus, whom I may be permitted to present unto the Lord, saying, 'Behold, here am I, and the children whom thou hast given me.' The next morning we committed

his body to the grave. Our whole congregation was present, and all seemed deeply impressed. I was so affected that I found it difficult to read the service; but he is with the faithful Shepherd. Two days before his death we visited him. Our conversation was very satisfactory. He was much affected at the sight of my wife's tears, for he regarded her as, as indeed she was, his spiritual parent. I said: Do you desire to recover? 'No,' he replied, 'I would prefer going to heaven. I know my sins are forgiven, for I have a Saviour who died for me. O Saviour, help me, I have no friend but Thee!' This was his dying prayer."

Mr. Weitbrecht was not turned aside from his high calling, either by the joys or sorrows of domestic life, though there never was an individual, who could more truly estimate them, or who more tenderly and completely fulfilled the claims of a husband and a father. One of the peculiar beauties of his character was, the remarkable combination of gentleness and decision, of the most winning and attractive manners and address with a dignified and manly bearing which drew all hearts to love him, at the same time that it inspired the greatest respect, and even reverence for him. This was strikingly exemplified in family intercourse, in social life, in his behavior towards the Native Christians, and even to his servants. All

felt that his word was law, yet that his acts were ever full of kindness and forbearance. His children delighted in him, and oh! what a parent they have lost in him!

A few more short extracts from his journal, extending through a course of several years, will, still further exemplify his Missionary character:—

"*January*, 1835.—Epiphany, the manifestation of Christ to the heathen; set out to preach the Gospel. I addressed a number of hearers; they were delighted and listened with deep attention, and commended the word. All seemed to be deeply impressed. If these visits could be often repeated, a garden of the Lord might soon spring up.

"*November* 1*st*.—I sat in a little boat, and went up the river. Met some friends in the way, who were full of mirth. I conversed a little while with them, but the state of my mind was directed to more sober views. I spent the evening in silent meditation on my past days, my future prospects, my work as an evangelist among the heathen. I felt the presence of Jesus. I longed to be holy as He is holy, and to show my love to Him, in following Him from suffering to glory.

"*May* 22*nd*, 1836.—Much sickness. I feel so firmly convinced that all trying things belong to our needful portion here, that I have of late

learnt to bear crosses with more patience and resignation; in this I can distinguish that the Lord carries on His work in my heart, though sometimes I am exceedingly depressed by my want of spirituality.

"*June 9th.*—The weather is exceedingly oppressive. After spending three hours in the morning at the English School and two at the Rajah's, to each of which places I have to go two miles, I find it impossible to go out again in the evening for preaching.

"*July.*—Was much struck at the remarks of a Baboo; he said the Missionaries, who preach the Gospel, are such blameless, kind, and meek men. In proof of this, he told the by-standers, that in earlier days he had thrown dust at Dr. Carey while preaching, who bore the insult with unexampled patience, not saying a word against the ill-treatment. How much even the heathen look upon the conduct of those who preach!

"*November.*—Called on a native gentleman, who had just lost his only son. I told him I had lost my little daughter, and could feel for him. He spoke of submission to fate. I told him God sends these trials for our spiritual good, to draw the earthly heart to heaven. I explained to him the delightful views which the Gospel of Jesus opens into a better world, and pointed out

the blessed state of those who can look forward to death, in the full hope of immortality. I spoke warmly from my heart, the tears trickled down the Baboo's cheeks, he could scarcely speak when I took my leave.

"*October*, 1837.—Administered the blessed sacrament. I had a most delightful season in communion with God. I think I feel more the great advantage and need of this blessed intercourse with my Saviour.

"*February*, 1838.—Preached to crowds last evening, and rose early; as I walked on, the morning star and the voice of the turtle-dove engaged my solemn meditation. What beautiful emblems of Christ's kingdom. Preached of them to the villagers."

In 1841, it was necessary for Mr. Weitbrecht to take a change, his own health and that of his wife being much broken up. He was, however, only doing his Master's business in another place. After he had recovered his strength, he attended very numerous meetings, and preached incessantly both in England and in Germany. His efforts were much blessed, and several instances occurred of souls being brought to Jesus under his simple and persuasive addresses. His own account of one or two incidents shall be given in extracts from letters.

"*October*, 1842.—I may just mention an interesting incident, which occurred at Strasburg, before I pass on. A few days previously to my arrival there, two ministers were heard remarking to each other, that half the accounts which missionaries wrote from heathen lands were lies. In my address from the pulpit, I plainly stated this, and added, 'Is it probable, my friends, that men, who go out with their lives in their hands should tell lies?' Both the ministers were present, and when I retired to the vestry after service, one of them affectionately embraced me.

"*November* 17*th*.—I was at Lauenberg. The Prince and Princess are in England visiting Queen Victoria, but I saw their children, who were delighted to see a Missionary. To-morrow I am going to join the evening party of Prince Hohenloe Jaxtberg, who heard of my missionary address. This will give me an opportunity of speaking of Missions to these great people. My addresses and labours have been much blessed to my own soul, and I feel more and more of that happy state, when one can do every thing with the soul in child-like reliance on Him and His blessing.

"20*th*.—I wish you could have seen the masses of hearers this day. I spoke an hour and a half. The people seemed quite electrified: there

were about 3,000 present! It was a beautiful sight! An old infidel physician, who had not been in church for thirty years, attended. He was quite shaken down, and sent us a present for our work.

"28*th*.—I have had sixteen public meetings in fourteen days—nothing but an especial measure of divine assistance and grace could have enabled me to go through it. Besides the meetings, the houses where I was became crowded with eager hearers, and I had to relate, advise, exhort from morning till night. The Lord has truly blessed my poor labours. Unto His name be the glory. At one place I met a pious widow, whose heart was overflowing with love to God and the brethren. I shall never forget that evening. I believe I feel more than ever the necessity of living for eternity, and doing all for and in the name of the Lord.

"*December 2nd*.—I am in the best hands, and have had new proofs of this, having received an especial measure of grace and help for extraordinary exertions. I dined on Sunday with the Dukes Paul and Adam of Würtemberg. The town contains only 400 Protestants, yet the church was so full, one might have walked upon the heads of the people. At least 1,000 individuals listened for one hour and a half, in breath-

less silence. The Dukes were present and became subscribers; you can imagine, I do not lose these fine opportunities for speaking, as God may enable me, to the hearts and consciences of my hearers. May the Lord water the seed. I could see and feel every where that He was with me. I never witnessed anything like it before. The prayers of hundreds followed me, and I ascribe this wonderful movement chiefly to this. An old peasant woman followed me from her village. She said, 'O sir, I am so glad: my heart was warmed yesterday. I love the Saviour, and wish to love Him more. Will you pray for me? I have to suffer much ridicule and persecution in my village, for they neither know, nor love Jesus. I had an only daughter, she died, and I am left alone: she spun and prepared a piece of flaxen cloth, but could only half finish it. It is worth 1*s.* a yard; but I cannot sell it, because it is the last thing my dear child ever made. Pray accept a part of it, and have a shirt made of it. Wear it when you are among the heathen; and then think of me as you look at it, and pray that I may be faithful to the end, and that my latter end may be peace.' I was almost moved to tears. If any feeling is at present preponderating in my mind, it is this; that the more we are permitted to witness the work of God in sinners,

the more will the instruments be abased and humbled in the dust. I trust I have learnt a lesson, which will remain deeply engraven on my heart and memory all my life. It is this; to live nearer to God, to believe and realize His presence more in all my undertakings, and to ascribe all the glory entirely to Him. My mind has been much taken up this week in thinking of the death of our dear brother DeRodt. Is there anything among us that displeases the Lord and leads Him to call away from our number those we seem least able to spare, our most devoted and efficient labourers? Does selfishness, church pride, worldly wisdom, exist among us, and those who guide us, and provoke His judgments, and lead Him to withhold the blessing He is so ready to grant, when it is sought aright? Oh! for a greater measure of devotedness, Divine wisdom and holy love, to furnish us well for our blessed work of Missions."

How does this extract strike one now in application to himself!

"*January 29th,* 1843.—In the Diligence, I met a young infidel. He said Christ was only a wise man. I tried to show him that he talked against reason, and appealed in the strongest way I could to his conscience. He retorted—'My mother is an English lady, and just such a

fanatical person as yourself.'—'Sir,' said I, 'the prayers of your mother will be like spears and arrows in your conscience, and you will have no rest till you apply to the same Saviour for mercy in whom she trusts.' I had a delightful afternoon with the pious Margravine of Carlsruhe. Her little girls were so pleased with the Missionary anecdotes I told them, that they could not eat their supper for joy. The Margravine is a very warm-hearted Christian, sister to the Queen of Würtemberg."

We cannot add more extracts, but these give a fair specimen of the man, and show that he was indeed instant in season and out of season, reproving, rebuking and exhorting. While in Germany, he published lectures on India in German, and other little works calculated to create an interest in Missions, which found a ready sale. He did the same in England in English, and visited every county, except Rutlandshire, to preach and speak for Missions. He was also in Scotland with the same object in view.

In 1844 he returned to India, and immediately entered with his former zeal upon his old labours.

"*January*, 1845.—After three years' absence, I am again in this heathen land, and desire to begin this year in humble reliance on my covenant God and Father in Jesus Christ. Oh! may it

please Him to use me as an instrument, unworthy as I feel myself to be, for the conversion of many deluded idolaters! I would wait for the fulfilment of His promises, and labour more prayerfully.

"10*th*.—Preached the first time again in the bazar of Burdwan, spoke to an intelligent Hindoo youth, and entreated him to think of his soul and turn to Jesus. He seemed to feel. Lord have mercy on his soul.

"23*rd*.—Performed service in Bengalee. I felt depressed, and cried mightily to the Lord, and He heard me, and I received such a manifestation of the glory of Jesus, the risen Saviour, to my soul, that I felt quite overwhelmed, and gave vent to my feelings in a flood of tears. These words —'Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord'—went to my heart: how great must have been their joy after the night of sorrow. I too could rejoice as if seeing Him. But what will it be on the great day of revelation, when we shall behold Him in reality! I preached with much openness of heart.

"*May* 10*th*.—Visited my old Pundit, who, I heard, was on his death-bed. When I took leave, he entreated me to pray for him: this was more than I expected: there was a hard struggle in the mind of the dying Brahmin. Two days after, his eldest son came to tell me he was gone; he

will now see the reality of eternal things. O Lord, visit this poor people with Thy salvation.

"1847.—I have had letters from my fatherland. Two of my nieces tell me I was instrumental in their conversion while at home. Their letters show that there is a real work of grace in their hearts. These are cheering dew-drops in this spiritual wilderness.

"*December.*—Preached in a large village: a young Baboo entered into conversation. He listened attentively, while I enlarged on the blessed effects of spiritual Christianity, and seemed deeply impressed.

"When in England the retrospect of the past years of missionary labour in India was delightful to me, and so will it be in the evening of life. I feel persuaded that I shall not then regret having spent my strength in this glorious service, but shall greatly rejoice in having been counted worthy to serve my Lord and Saviour in so noble a cause. I would take the Apostle's exhortation home to myself:—'Wherefore be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'

"*Chinsurah, Jan.* 1848.—Our little Edmund has left this vale of tears: as he died I looked out of my window, and saw the Ganges before

me, slowly and majestically rolling down its waters. A speaking emblem, thought I, of life's short course—soon perhaps mine may close too. May it finish well, in the fulness of faith and hope of glory! Five dear children of ours are now there."

This last extract is introduced to exemplify how fully his prayers with regard to his own departure were answered.

In July, 1848, he became seriously ill—a cold he caught settled on his throat and chest, and these organs being much weakened by so many years of continual preaching and speaking, the attack became very obstinate, and he never fully recovered it. He was absent from Burdwan seven months for sea air and other changes. With all his weakness and depression, he still tried to do something for his Master, and he made good and useful impressions wherever he went. He preached to the pilots in the vessel at the Sandheads, and he spoke to the sick and dying when he met them. This affliction was much sanctified to him and he grew more rapidly in every Christian grace from that time forward. As soon as he was able to preach in Bengalee again, he entered on itinerant labours with increased devotedness, and finally resolved to offer himself to the Society as a travelling missionary, to leave the com-

forts of home entirely, and spend the whole year round in going from place to place, to preach Christ more extensively than he had ever yet done. All the excellent gifts bestowed upon him seemed ripening for more extended influence and usefulness,—but they were ripening for glory. His views seemed to get such an extraordinary degree of elevation and brightness, and his faith to prevail in so wonderful a manner, that he saw no difficulties; and while others were astonished at his increased spirit of devotedness, he seemed unconscious of it, and practically exemplified, by beginning his self-denying tours according to his plan, that he was prepared in spirit to carry out his proposed course, however much it might involve. He spoke most rapturously at times of the blessed period which was hastening on, when India's myriads would bow before the Lord, and her people be made willing in the day of His power. Like one of old he longed to see that day, and by faith he saw it and was glad.

He had always been remarkable for a singular union of lovely and yet manly characteristics, for a child-like simplicity and ingenuousness, with a prudent carefulness in delicate and difficult matters. One could read his heart, for he was an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no

guile; yet he was wise and judicious, and correct in his judgment of men and things to an unusual degree. He had a fine perception and great tact which prevented him from ever attempting to intermeddle, or to take upon himself what many of his character and influence would have thought belonged to them.

Equally singular was his power of adapting himself to circumstances. He could sit down for hours in Bengalee or English schools and give his whole heart to teaching, or he could go out among the teeming idolaters, and preach to them, as has been shewn by his journal, so as to affect their feelings in a remarkable degree. He could stand up before an English congregation with the greatest acceptance, or speak to an humble assembly of native Christians, in a way that thrilled through their hearts. He could engage in secular business and do it thoroughly and efficiently, but it never secularized his mind, and he could turn from it to his own peculiar and dearly loved spiritual duties in a moment, as if no concern about anything else possessed his thoughts. It was this rare combination of qualities, which made him so truly fitted for being a missionary in heart and soul, in deed, and in truth.

Many who knew him can testify to the correctness of this portrait. The following letter from

his oldest and much esteemed friend and brother, Mr. Lacroix, will show something of this.

"*Calcutta, March 13th*, 1852.

* * * * * *

"I became acquainted with dear Weitbrecht, from the very time of his landing in India, upwards of twenty-one years ago; and, very soon after, similarity of views and feelings on most topics in which, as men, as Christians and missionaries, we were interested, drew us to each other and led to a friendship, which was never interrupted for a moment up to his removal from this earthly scene; and it is now sweet to me to hope, that when our common Lord calls me hence, that friendship will be renewed and continued in those happy realms of peace, where all those that are Christ's will be permitted to dwell together with Him for ever.

"I need hardly say, that my dear departed friend was a Christian in the fullest sense of the term; by which I mean one with whom Christianity was a living principle, which pervaded his every feeling and action. Having found, by his own experience, in Jesus, a Saviour both able and willing to save him, he placed all his hopes and all his reliance on Him alone, and accounted it a great privilege, in return for redeeming mercy, to be permitted to devote himself and all his facul-

ties to his blessed service. Of this, his long and arduous labours bore abundant testimony. Allow me further to remark, that while sincerely attached to the Church of which he was a minister, his Christianity was of that lofty and comprehensive kind which soars far above mere forms, names and denominations, and led him to view, not with empty professions, but to treat as a brother beloved every one in whom he could trace the image of his Saviour, and in whom he perceived a cordial breathing after a perfect conformity with the Divine mind and will. To such a one he gave the hand of Christian fellowship; and the mutual love of both to Christ became the bond of union between each other. Ah! and was this not a truer and stronger bond than the mere Shibboleth of party? It was this true, genuine, liberal Christian spirit exemplified by my beloved brother, which made him so highly respected while living, and so deeply lamented at death, by good men of all denominations.

"As a minister of the Gospel and a missionary, he was most faithful. My long intimacy with him, and my travels with him on the continent of Europe ten years ago, and in this country, enabled me to judge of this perhaps better than many others. Whatever the circumstances might be, I found him ever ready to do his Master's

work, whether in public or in private, and this without constraint. It was on such occasions always seen and felt that his whole soul was engaged in the work, and that the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom and the benefiting of souls was truly the anxious desire of his heart. He possessed that most valuable, though rare talent, in a natural manner and without the least approach to cant, of giving a religious and improving turn to conversation. I have often admired his tact in this respect, both among Europeans and Natives, on whom, whatever might be the result of his endeavours, the impression produced was invariably that he was a sincere and good man, whose pure and disinterested aim was to benefit those with whom he came in contact.

"But it was the conversion of the people of this country, that chiefly occupied his thoughts, and constituted the most intense desire of his heart. He was never wearied in devising and carrying out plans which had that object in view; and I scarcely remember seeing him, but the conversion of the heathen was the principal topic of his conversation. Indeed, on Sunday, the 29th February, only a few hours before he was attacked with the fatal disease which cut short his earthly life, he had spent some time in making

arrangements with me for an extensive missionary tour, which, God willing, he and myself were to undertake together, as soon as the season would permit. He seemed quite elated at the prospect of usefulness which this intended tour apparently held out; and, I understand, could not refrain from alluding to it with evident pleasure in conversation with a respected friend, even after preaching his last sermon in St. James' Church. Thus did he show himself intent on his Master's work to the very end; and, no doubt, he has now received the reward which the Lord has promised to those servants whom, when He cometh, He shall find so doing.

"Another characteristic of my late friend was his predilection for making the realities of eternity a frequent subject of his own meditations and of conversation with his friends, at least those with whom he was very intimate. I have seldom seen a man whose soul seemed to be so absorbed in this all-important concern. When out together on preaching tours, after the labours of the day, the eternal world, its nature, its employments, and its enjoyments, was the topic to which he would often and often revert. Frequently, a very late hour at night found us in our solitary tent engaged in conversation on this deeply interesting subject; and I must add, that

this was not done on his part, from the mere desire of speculating on it, but rather with a view of becoming better prepared for it, when it should be his Lord's pleasure to call him hence. And doubtless, it was this familiarity with the eternal world, and his constantly keeping it in view, which contributed to render his passage thither so calm and easy. He has now entered that heavenly world on which he so delighted to dwell, and to which, amidst the vicissitudes of life and his struggles against in-dwelling sin, he looked forward with such joy as the consummation of all his hopes! May my last end be like his!

"And now, my dear Mrs. Weitbrecht, be comforted! Your beloved husband has fought the good fight,—he has finished his course,—he has kept the faith,—and has, no doubt, received the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, gives to all those who love his appearing. You need not, therefore, in regard to him, to mourn as those do, who have no hope. And in respect to yourself, and your dear children, of all of whom my lamented friend used frequently to speak to me in terms of intense affection, the God in whom he trusted—his covenant-God, will be your God also, and surely cause you to experience the fulfilment of his blessed promise, that he will be the husband of

the widow and the father of the fatherless. Let this be your confidence! He is faithful and will also do it! He will never leave you nor forsake you!

A. F. Lacroix."

As the ears of corn ripen for the harvest, they bow their heads nearer to the ground. So it is often observed to be with believers: they then see more of their own imperfection, and often express their sense of it; yet they repose, with a growing confidence, on the love of God through Christ Jesus. The nearer they advance to their heavenly rest, the more humble they become, though not the less active or useful. They feel increasingly desirous of improving every talent they possess to the glory of God, knowing, seeming to have an inward conviction, that the time is short. Thus it was most strikingly with the subject of this notice. His character always lovely and of good report, his daily life, and his inward experience of the Divine favour, increased in brightness as the setting sun of his mortal life approached its horizon. The native Christians remarked among themselves that his love and humility filled them all with wonder. "He has now," said they, "humbled himself to the very dust. Oh what a mark of a really renewed soul!" The following short extracts from his journal exemplify this.

"*April* 29*th*, 1851.—This has been my forty-ninth birth-day. God's name be praised! How much have I been blessed, how highly favoured by my dear Saviour. I know Him. I also love Him, though too feebly, but I desire none but Him, and in this choice I am as sure as I am of my own existence. Therefore, I know I shall be safe, notwithstanding my sinfulness and unfaithfulness to Him. I was in tears all this morning, tears of shame and gratitude shed before Him. He knows them. 'Thou gatherest my tears into thy bottle.'

"*April* 30*th*.—Felt very ill. Sent for the native doctor. Made all my accounts and papers ready as well as I could, and wrote memoranda for guidance and a letter to my dear brother Lacroix. Prayed very much that the Lord would spare my life this year till my dear wife and child returned.

"*May* 1*st*.—The native doctor treated me skilfully, and I feel quite relieved and easy. Thank God! I would be truly grateful for this new deliverance, and say with David—'Thou hast delivered my soul from *death*.'

"*Sunday, May* 4*th*.—I have been keeping quiet to-day for recovering my strength. The enemy whispered to me last night—'Lost a whole week.' But I feel pretty sure that time is not lost which

the Lord employs to lay his servants low at His footstool. Time lost! Why, He does not want such a poor fellow as I am at all. Oh! may I learn to be nothing, and cheerfully submit to His will, when He calls me to sit quiet and wait His bidding."

During 1851, his family were separated from him, and he suffered much from the separation, but while earthly objects of love were removed from his side for a season, Jesus, his tender Lord, who cleaves closer to His people in their deepest need, manifested himself to him in all His power and grace, and made up to him by His own presence the blank he felt. He gave him to experience that one draught of the water of the upper springs is more than all the waters in the nether springs. It was truly a precious preparation both to himself and to her who now mourns his loss;—for the longer separation, which though wisely hidden from them both, was known by their heavenly Father to be near at hand.

The following extracts are from letters which he wrote to England during 1851.

"I have had a blessed cold season, and travelled about for two months incessantly. During January, my valued friend, Mr. Lacroix, and myself, made a very extensive tour together, and distributed 100 New Testaments, 1800 single Gospels

and Psalms in Bengalee, and about 5000 tracts of various kinds. The direct preaching of the Gospel in connection with these distributions, I consider as the two witnesses, which belong to each other. In most places the Hindoos heard the word gladly, and frequently we had from 600 to 1000 hearers around us, under the shade of a large tree or before an idol temple.

"One day after preaching, a man took me to his cottage, and shewed me two Gospels in Bengalee, carefully wrapped up, in which he had been instructed as a boy in a mission school about 26 years ago. The books had been kept most carefully, and the possessor could repeat several parts of chapters from memory. His conversation shewed that he was not far from the kingdom of God. On a line of 100 miles we visited 13 towns, each of which contained more than 10,000 inhabitants. At 7 of these, no missionary had ever been seen. One town numbered 36,000 inhabitants, and had 53 streets and lanes, and 50 bazars, it was an hour's walk from one end of it to the other—another town had 25,000 inhabitants.

"On one occasion we were surrounded by 1000 people in a few minutes, and we preached incessantly for three days to congregations of from 500 to 800 hearers. I stood up before a Kalee

temple—diabolical figures were painted on the wall around the horrid goddess. I described her character from the Shasters, and then the character of Christ according to the Gospel, and His mission of love and mercy; I had about 600 hearers, and felt as if the power of the Spirit were moving the mass, they were all as silent as a church congregation, and I heard sighs. It was a delightful occasion. On preaching near the same spot again two days afterwards, an old man with an honest pleasing expression of countenance said, 'You, Sir, have pointed to the right place:' (he saw me lifting up my hand to heaven,) 'there is the true God, but we know him not, and there is nobody who can shew us the right way.' I said a short prayer:—'Lord, have mercy on me a poor sinner, and shew me the way of salvation by the help of thy good Spirit.' He repeated this after me twice, and promised me to offer the prayer daily. 'Give me a book, please, Sir,' he said, 'my sons can read it to me. I want to hear more of this incarnation of Divine mercy.' He followed me to the tent, and I gave him the Gospels of Matthew and John.

"I saw the tree under which my tent had been pitched four years before, and where I was at midnight attacked by cholera, the spasms shooting through me, and my pulse going fast. Yet

here I am still, the living among the dead, a monument of mercy. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, who has redeemed thy life from destruction, and crowned thee with loving-kindness and tender mercy.'

"I was one day speaking on the parable of the wheat and tares, the origin of sin, and the Gospel as a principle of life and happiness, upon the end of the wicked and the happy death of believers. As my feelings warmed on the last delightful part, a brahman called out, 'If it be such a happy thing for Christians to leave the world, why do you send for doctors when you are ill? and why do you take medicine to get better?' I said: 'Life is a preparation for eternity; if we shorten our preparation by neglect we resemble a foolish school-boy, who returns home before the holidays are come. What will his father say to him? You lazy fellow, return to your work: is this the time to come home?'

"This morning I preached at Sarba Mangala, a famous idol temple in the town of Burdwan. Some old fakirs were much affected, and sighed again and again, while I was showing that the spiritual condition of the Hindoos bore an exact resemblance to the bodily state of the blind man. I felt very much encouraged by the intense attention of the crowd around me, when I

recommended Jesus, as 'the great and good Physician,' able and willing to take away their blindness, and to restore the light of Divine knowledge, grace and salvation to their souls. Any stranger witnessing such a scene would say, 'Surely these poor people must be convinced of the truth;' but we are labouring on a hard soil, and idolatry has fearfully wasted and ruined man's soul in this unhappy land. One thing, however, is clear, we must go on, and hammer away: the hardest granite can be broken by strong and continued effort. God in His own time will make good His promises.

"I often wish I could see dear friends in England again, but my Master desires me to do His business here, and He has a full right to dispose of us. It is, after all, the most blessed life to be engaged in His vineyard."

Many hearts responded to the wish expressed in the concluding part of the foregoing extracts, but "God had prepared some better thing for him," than any earthly society can give, and there is no doubt that his quiet trust in his Heavenly Father, brought more real and substantial comfort to his mind, than intercourse with any human friend, however dear; for there is an inexpressible sweetness, in resting in God alone, in feeling Him to be our dwelling-place, in "wait-

ing only upon Him," hiding under the shadow of His wings, and wrapping one-self round, as it were, in the mantle of His everlasting love. This fills the soul with an influx of holy joy and satisfaction, which surprises even itself, and teaches it what it means to repose on Jesus' bosom.

His intense and thankful joy on his re-union with the objects of his earthly love, may not, and cannot be described. It seemed to him like a foretaste of the re-union of the spirits of the blessed in glory, and who shall say it was not? Frequently did he exclaim in the fulness of his heart, "Oh, how happy I am! I hope all my friends are as happy as I, in the enjoyment of their treasures." A letter he wrote to a friend, and which was found in his portfolio after his death, alludes to this, and it is in other respects so singularly applicable to what was so near, though unknown to him when penning it, that a part of it may well be introduced here :—

"When a voice said to the prophet, 'Cry,' he asked, 'What shall I cry?' and the Lord gave him a text, 'All flesh is grass: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of God abideth for ever.' In like manner I have been asking, What shall I write? and I recollect that a simple tale of what we are doing, and how the presence of Jesus is cheering our hearts and His grace

helping us on in our labours of love, is all dear friends at home desire to hear from us labourers in a heathen land. This is a personal enjoyment rather than a task, and while thus communing with those I love and esteem, I can in a measure realize the happiness of the aged St. John when he wrote to his brethren, 'Truly *our* fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.'

"You may imagine, dear friend, the joy and gratitude I felt, when I welcomed my beloved wife once more on Indian soil with the sweet little boy, who, by his happy and winning manners, is daily cheering the heart of his Papa. I hope we shall be permitted to labour some years more in this heathen land. It is a great honor to do so. I often pray that a sense of it may ever remain fresh and lively on my mind. What we want above all things in an Indian climate, exposed as we are to so many depressing influences, is the grace of *perseverance*. We are going to have a Conference shortly at Calcutta, and in thinking of a text for an address which I am to deliver to my brethren, the words occurred to my mind—'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' As I am advancing in years, I feel that this must be kept in view. The prospect cheers one up to labour on without weariness. Well, my dear brother, we

go to the same fountain, we all drink the same spiritual drink, which flows from the rock, and that rock is Christ."

Here it ends, and it is supposed to be the last letter he wrote.

He preached for the last time at Burdwan, on Sunday the 21st February, from the words referred to in this letter, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." He had composed the sermon on the previous Friday, and his mind was so absorbed in the subject, that he delivered it first to his English congregation in the morning, and again in the afternoon to his native Christian flock in Bengalee, telling them it was the sermon he had preached in English in the morning, and the one he was going to address to his missionary brethren in the coming week.

He went down to Calcutta on the 23rd February, in his usual health, though there was certainly apparent, with his uncommon spirituality, an internal feebleness of body, which doubtless predisposed him as far as human causes go, for the attack under which he sunk. Some of his friends and several of the native Christians had a presentiment, it seems, that he was ripe for heaven, and felt they should not wonder if they saw his face no more; but at the time he left home, though he did in a most remarkable man-

ner "set his house in order," and record memoranda of everything relative to the accounts of the Mission, the schools, &c., yet it was not perceptible from his remarks that he had any actual presentiment himself, nor is it believed he had, though he had so wonderful a preparedness.

He preached to his brethren on Wednesday evening, the 25th, with remarkable affection, earnestness and suitability. As he concluded his address, his soul seemed as it were panting for heaven, and he broke out with indescribable ardor, in the following rapturous sentences, partly extemporaneously:—"Be thou faithful unto death. Soon we too shall have done with our labours and trials. Yes, dear brethren, I sometimes feel as if I should very soon have done with mine. I feel as on the very borders of the heavenly Canaan. The great thing is to end well. A faithful servant need not fear when His Lord calls him. He is ready to obey the summons. 'Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.'"

"Go labour on, thy hands are weak,
Thy knees are faint, thy soul cast down,
Yet falter not, the prize is near,
The throne, the kingdom, and the crown;
Toil on, toil on, thou soon shalt find,
For labour rest, for exile home;

Soon shalt thou hear the Bridegroom's voice,
The midnight cry—Behold, I come."

On Friday the Conference closed, and he spent the evening among his brethren. He conducted social worship, and chose the hymn, beginning—

"There is a land of pure delight," &c.

which he joined in singing with holy ardour. He then read 1st Peter, 5th chapter, and spoke with great earnestness on it, particularly the 7th verse —"Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." His prayer was full of heaven, and deeply impressed all present. On Saturday, he went to breakfast with an old and esteemed brother, who was struck by his heavenly conversation and his prayer after breakfast. He alluded with peculiar pleasure in conversation with his wife, to the Conference meetings, as having been so characterised by a spirit of love and harmony, and also to a visit he had had from a Native Christian brother, who told him his sermon had stirred him up from death to life, or words to that effect. In the evening he was again with friends, and sung several German hymns of a highly spiritual character. Saying, as he begun, "My voice often fails me; it is nearly worn out, but it will be renewed by and bye:" adding, "Don't you think we shall sing much in heaven?" He

also united with the party afterwards in the hymn containing the lines—

> "The saints below and all above
> But one communion make."

On Sunday he longed to preach after all the fatigues of the week, and eagerly caught at an invitation doubtfully put by Mr. Boswell, after morning service at St. James'. Having spent the intervening time with his friend, Mr. Lacroix, where with the premonitory symptoms of the disease upon him, he settled the details of an extensive missionary tour they proposed to take together, he went to church apparently well, nor was he seemingly conscious of indisposition. He united in the devotional part of the service very warmly, and in singing particularly that verse of the hymn given out:—

> "And, oh! when I have safely passed
> Through every conflict, but the last,
> Then still unchanging watch beside
> My dying bed, for Thou hast died."

He preached as a dying man from Revelation, 22nd chapter, 20th verse,—"Surely, I come quickly. Even so, come Lord Jesus." Those present will never forget either his words or his appearance. His countenance shone as he reiterated again and again, "Even so, come quickly." His soul seemed panting to be delivered from its

thraldom, and to be trying its pinions for a heavenward flight.

After service he conversed cheerfully in the vestry with dear friends, and referred to his projected tours, with the most lively energy. His friend, Mr. Boswell, remarked to another, "Dear Weitbrecht and Lacroix, with God's blessing, may carry all Bengal before them." But God's ways are not as ours. Immediately on his return home, he was seized with cholera, and though no human means were spared, and prayer was offered unceasingly for him, in ten hours from that period, as far as this world is concerned, he was no more. One night's storm felled the goodly cedar, which had stood many a blast:—and at about 9½ A. M. on Monday morning, the 1st of March, this dear shepherd, with his staff in his hand, and his sandals on his feet, passed over Jordan.

"His sword was in his hand,
Still warm with recent fight,
Ready that moment at command,
Through rock and steel to smite."

Even after his seizure he went up stairs to take tea with his brethren, several of whom approached to speak to him as he sat on an easy chair, but were deterred by his solemn and peculiar appearance, and a feeling of unwillingness to

disturb him. He seemed absorbed in the singing of Pope's Ode—the Dying Christian to his Soul, which two or three were engaged in together in a distant part of the room. It appeared as if it was for him they were unconsciously uttering those beautiful words:—

"Vital spark of heavenly flame,
Quit, oh quit, this mortal frame!
Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying,
Oh the pain—the bliss of dying.
Cease, fond nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life!
The world recedes, it disappears,
Heaven opens on my eyes, my ears
With sounds seraphic ring:
Lend, lend your wings, I mount, I fly.
O Grave, where is thy victory?
O Death, where is thy sting?"

As soon as they had finished, he left the room and withdrew for ever from the society he had so much delighted in on earth, to unite a few hours after with the general assembly and church of the first-born, and the spirits of just men made perfect above.

During the night he was frequently asked if Jesus was near, to which his invariable reply was, "Very near, and very precious." Once one of his affectionate and devoted medical friends said to him—"Does your Master stand by you in

your hour of trial?" "Oh! yes," was his ready answer.—"From the time you preached to my soldiers, and told them of Jesus' love and grace, I loved you," said this pious doctor.—"That love," rejoined the dying man, "is the beginning of the communion of saints, which shall last throughout eternity." As day broke, many who loved him assembled around his dying couch, and witnessed his bright look and readiness for glory; yet hope was entertained to the last. It was his dearest earthly connection, who had felt from the first, that the angel of glory had summoned him, who called on his beloved brother, Boswell, to give him the parting word, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;" and with this word he entered heaven. The morning without clouds broke at once upon him as the clear shining of the sun after the rain. His remains were conveyed to their last resting-place in the evening, and truly it could be said, "Devout men carried him to his burial, and made great lamentation over him." A missionary present spoke of it as the most touching funeral he had witnessed during thirty years' residence in India. Tears flowed from many eyes unaccustomed to weep; as those of Jesus had done at the grave of Lazarus, the friend whom He loved; but a voice was heard

from heaven saying; "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours and their works do follow them." The news at Burdwan caused deep grief among his poor flock. One sound of lamentation was heard among them, and the touching exclamation—"Why were not two or three of us taken in his place?"

But Jesus lives. The Master has not departed, though His faithful servant, the beloved of his Lord, has gone to dwell in safety by Him. That blessed Saviour, having loved His own which were in the world, has loved them unto the end, and He will be the God of the widow and of the fatherless children.

> "Servant of Christ, well done!
> Rest from thy loved employ;
> The battle fought, the victory won,
> Enter thy Master's joy."

The circumstances attending the removal of Mr. Weitbrecht were most mercifully ordered. He came to Calcutta to "die in the presence of all his brethren." He was not cut off, as some faithful missionaries are, in the lonely jungle, apart from all who could tenderly minister to him, nor was he permitted to taste any of the bitterness of death. As far as could be perceived, he was not aware that he was in the dark valley.

He never enquired the nature of his disease, or expressed one doubt or apprehension. Though so tenderly attached, and so faithful to the objects of his earthly love and care, he had no anxious thought for them. His gracious Lord seemed to deal just as kindly and considerately with him as he had always delighted to do with others, and made him to rest in His love for ever and ever. Nor will He be less mindful of his widowed mission, or his work. He can and will raise up another; yea, it is hoped, many more in his room, who will be baptised for the dead, and who will, it is humbly believed, be permitted to reap with joy the fruits of that precious seed, which he went forth to sow with weeping. The following extract, which is peculiarly appropriate to his character will close this short sketch ;—

"Fear not, but that he will be himself again. Some good men fall asleep in Jesus, so full of infirmities, that they cannot but be greatly changed both in body and mind by the healing miracle of the resurrection. But will not those who die, as Moses and Elias did, in the fulness of their labours and their strength be as quickly recognized, as were Moses and Elias, by the faithful in God's holy mount?—As our Saviour's wounds were healed on the morning of the resurrection, so shall his mortal disease be healed, and all that

we most loved in him shall become immortal. The tone of earnestness shall be there, deepened into a more perfect beauty, by a closer intercourse with Jesus—the cheerfulness shall be there, without a cloud to dim it throughout eternity, and how will the most aspiring visions of India's redemption, that ever filled his mind on earth, be more than realized in that day of the restitution of all things? How will he rejoice in his strength and immortality, as he busies himself to perform the whole counsel of God, no longer doubted or disputed by men. What member of the Divine body will glory more than he will, in the Catholic and perfect union of men with each other and with God."

SERMONS.

distance, are being fulfilled in our days, and before our eyes. The word of eternal life is now published in every country, and in almost every language of the inhabited parts of the earth; and the Church of Christ is raising the banner of the cross in every land. From what the Lord has begun to accomplish in our days, through the instrumentality of his servants, and the blessings which have accompanied their efforts, the observer of daily events can safely infer, that the time is drawing near, when the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord; and where is the Christian who does not rejoice in the fact, that the long reiterated prayer of the Church, "*Thy kingdom come*," is *now* being answered and confirmed by the divine *Amen;* even by the conversion of a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues? Thus the words preceding my text find their literal accomplishment: "They shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion;" and our Saviour's own declaration, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things, which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things, which ye hear, and have not heard them."

If we see on the other hand the power of the enemy manifesting itself more than ever, and putting forth all its energy to counteract and overwhelm the Church of Christ, we must not be surprised nor dis-

couraged at this. These things are all foretold, and Satan will pour out all his fury against her, until the time appointed; but the time is short, and then he shall be shut up, and his influence removed from the earth.

Clearly and evidently as the historical facts concerning the establishment of the kingdom of Christ, and the conversion of people of different nations, present themselves before us; there are yet numbers who seem not to recognise them, or who are rather inclined to dispute the truth of them, or, at least, feel no interest in them; and this, for the simple reason that they cannot appreciate the value of immortal souls, in comparison with the things of the world. It belongs therefore to the duty of the minister of the gospel, to direct especial attention to this great subject; for the glory of God,—the welfare of his fellow-sinners,—and eternal interests are concerned in it.

If we have the love of God in our hearts,—if we profess to live and prepare for heaven, we cannot but feel interested in *the work of Missions*. The Spirit of truth and grace will prompt us to communicate the blessing *we* possess, to those who are still without it. May the Lord so apply this word to our hearts as to lead us to seek the blessing it holds out for ourselves; and to call forth our lively zeal to communicate it to our fellow-sinners.

We consider

I.—The Manifestation of the Divine Power.

II.—The Exhortation grounded upon it (to depart from the sins of the world).

1. *The manifestation of the Divine power* :—"The Lord has made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all nations." Thus spake the prophet in His name to the nation which God had chosen to be His own peculiar people. That this expressive simile signifies the almighty power of Jehovah is evident from many passages, where it is employed. Thus in Ps. lxxvii. 15, "Thou hast, *with thine arm*, redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph ;"—where the Psalmist alludes to the exercise of the Divine power and mercy, in delivering the people of Israel from the Egyptians, and conducting them in safety through the Red Sea. How expressive are the words, "*He has made bare his holy arm !*" The language reminds one of a valiant warrior, who puts off the encumbrance of his dress, and is going to prepare for the conflict, when he sees the enemy approaching. So stands the Conqueror with many crowns. He engages the dread enemy, and defends and saves his chosen people. Thus He is represented in the prayer of the Psalmist,—"Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty ; and in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness ; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things."

That this promise was in the first instance intended for the people of Israel, there can be no doubt. It was given to assure them of the deliverance of the Jewish Church from the captivity of Babylon. In perusing the whole chapter we find that it contains a

message of *consolation*. For their sins and the sins of their fathers the chosen people had to suffer bitter affliction. God permitted king Nebuchadnezzar to drive them away from their own land, into the enemy's country, and at the waters of Babylon they sat down and wept tears of repentance, remembering Zion, and the temple where they had worshipped Jehovah. But the affliction was for an appointed time. When the end in view was obtained, the scourge wherewith God had chastised his people was laid aside. The tyrant oppressor was removed. Israel's God raised up a deliverer, Cyrus, the king of Persia, in a most unexpected manner; who set the people free, and permitted them to return to their own beloved country.

When this wonderful deliverance, which, like the rising sun, shed its cheering rays upon their forlorn and desolate condition took place, the considerate Israelite, who had the fear of the Lord in his heart, must have been struck with joyful surprise and admiration, at the merciful dealings of his faithful God, who had thus remembered him in his captivity, and he would exclaim: "Surely this is the work of our God, who keepeth covenant and mercy to His people"—*The Lord has made bare his arm, his holy arm, in the eyes of all nations; his salvation hath he openly shewn, in the sight of the heathen.*

My dear hearers, the Lord deals in a different manner with his own servants, and with an unbelieving people. Peculiar mercies impose upon the former

a greater amount of responsibility. The latter may for a long time prosper in the world, and have, concerning this life, all that their hearts could wish. They are insensible of the dealings of the Lord, and so they go, heedless and stubborn, like sheep to the slaughter. They live for the world, and die in their sins. But with those who belong to himself and his people, the Lord adopts a stricter course of discipline; because they are destined for a more glorious end. If they turn out of the right way and prove unfaithful, their errors are more severely chastised. This is shown by the Psalmist, (Ps. lxxxix. 30—33.) *If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.* But then is added the gracious promise: *Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.* How tender and compassionate is the heart of that Father, who, while he chastises his children, is nevertheless holding out consoling assurances of his unchangeable mercy! and such a Father our God is still. Oh, let us view and acknowledge him in this character!

The Lord has made bare his holy arm, and manifested his power to save, in the dispensation of the Gospel, more prominently than He did in times of old. The Jews were delivered from a temporal captivity; but we are freed by JESUS, the Captain of our Salvation, from the bondage of sin, from the guilt and

misery of our fallen state, from the power of Satan and eternal damnation. The great commission He was to accomplish on earth is expressly stated by the prophet, Isai. lxi. 1: *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.* What more unhappy state can we imagine than that of a person, who is groaning under the weight of his sins; whose mind is harassed by the reproaches of a guilty conscience; who dreads the future; and finds no way of relief! Such is the condition of every unconverted sinner. Such is particularly the state of the poor Hindoo; with this difference only, that *he* is not truly conscious of the *cause* of his unhappiness, because his conscience is almost extinguished by ignorance and superstition; and he has been accustomed to confound good and evil, through the debasing doctrines of his Shasters.

To such unhappy beings, our Saviour when he was on earth, reached out his delivering hand; and when the man sick of the palsy was brought before him, He first regarded the state of his soul, and said, "*My son, thy sins are forgiven thee.*" The Apostles received and acted upon the same divine commission; "*to open men's eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*"

(Acts xxvi. 18.) God thus manifested the arm of His power through his servants in a most eminent manner. It could be seen that God was with them. The Holy Spirit accompanied their testimony with His divine power to men's hearts. It could be seen—it could be felt, wherever they preached the word, that it was accompanied with a divine power. The Apostles delivered their testimony of Christ crucified and of his resurrection, with an energy of faith, with a deep conviction of the truth, which astonished the world; and within thirty years, a great part of Asia and Italy was filled with the joyful sound of the gospel; and thousands of sinners were delivered from the bondage of a debasing idolatry, and dwelt in peace under the enlightened and sanctifying influence of the truth.

And can we not, my brethren, perceive, that the arm of the Almighty is manifested *as* clearly in our days, and particularly so in this highly favoured land.* Oh, what has the Lord wrought among you through the power of his gospel! Compare your present state with that of other countries in Europe or in Asia. From whence do you derive the numberless comforts and advantages you enjoy in your present social and highly civilized state? Undoubtedly from the gospel. This it is which has, by a train of influences, produced a delightful change upon the human mind and heart. Why is it that we are no more beset with that moral and spiritual darkness, which hovered over our ances-

* England—where this Sermon was preached.

tors in the middle ages? It is because the Word of God was, at the time of the blessed Reformation, raised out of the dust, and spread its renewed light over the mind and hearts of men, and set them free from the errors and superstitions of Popery. Wherever the gospel has exercised its influence, it has improved the moral and social condition of man, and brought civilization, comfort and happiness to society, to which those nations among whom it has not been preached are uniformly strangers. *We* too often forget this; and are unthankful for these temporal blessings, which should lead us to seek the spiritual blessings, which it also alone bestows.

The Lord has made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations. How truly are these words realised in our days in the work of *Missions among heathen nations.* God has put it into the hearts of thousands of Christians in this favoured land to send the word of life to those countries. He has raised up men to go forth, to preach the everlasting gospel with faithfulness and zeal. More than one thousand four hundred Protestant missionaries are at the present day engaged in this great work among idolaters and Mahomedans, in countries of every climate: of these one hundred and sixty missionaries have gone out, during the last twenty years, from the mission seminary at Basle, and of these *one hundred and thirty* are at this hour in the field of labour, and *forty* more are preparing to follow them.

I have lately visited the southern part of Protestant Germany and Switzerland, and have attended many

missionary meetings, and, I am happy to say, there is an increasing interest manifested in those countries in the work of missions. Many of the ministers feel willing to give their aid; and associations are forming in towns and villages. Christians of all classes and ranks appear to feel that the time is come when all should unite their efforts in spreading the Gospel among themselves and in heathen lands. It is true, that, on the other hand, much hostility is displayed. Infidelity prevails in Germany to a fearful degree. There are the new theological systems of Hegel and Strauss, which contain nothing less than a refined kind of Pantheism, and by which not only the Divinity of our Saviour is disputed, but all personality in the Godhead denied. Yes! they are systems which reminded me forcibly of the abominable philosophy of the Brahmans of the Ganges; and these are openly taught by some of the most talented professors of the universities in Germany; and numbers of young men are led astray, being instructed to believe that the life of Christ is nothing more than a mythological story. But while unbelief is thus unblushingly seeking to trample upon the eternal truth of Divine revelation; the people of GOD have, on their side, taken a more decided stand than ever; and we have every reason to rejoice at this separation between light and darkness. While the former are deriding, and scoffing at the idea of a particular Divine providence, and asking *Where is the promise of his coming?* there are a goodly number of faithful people of GOD, who can distinguish the signs

of the times, and look for the manifestation of the arm of the Lord; who feel united in heart with their brethren in Great Britain, and pray for the coming of Christ's kingdom throughout the whole earth.

My brethren, the Lord has made bare his holy arm in that country in which I have been permitted to preach the gospel; for India has been opened for the reception of the gospel. That great Empire has been entrusted by Divine providence to the Government of Great Britain; and a most responsible trust it is. That fearful system of idolatry, which the pride, cupidity and wickedness of a depraved priesthood have imposed upon its inhabitants,—which has held them for nearly 3000 years in degrading bondage,—which has sunk a very interesting and intellectual nation into the lowest depths of moral depravity,—is to be overthrown; and that nation is to be added to the happy subjects of Christ's kingdom. He who has read the history of British India, and is in some degree acquainted with its present state, can clearly perceive, that it is destined by the providence of God to become the centre of civilization and Christianity in Asia; and that from Calcutta on the east, and Bombay on the west, the gospel of Christ is to diffuse its beams through that vast continent, and to enlighten and convert the various tribes and nations which inhabit those regions.

How truly then are the prophetic words realised there! for many intelligent Hindoos have acknowledged to me, that it was the hand of God, which

delivered their country to the English nation. But *this* is not all; many of them are aware,—the conviction is forcibly coming home to their minds,—that the end and object of this great change is nothing less, than the establishment of Christianity upon the ruins of their idolatry; and distasteful as this acknowledgment is to their feelings, they are brought to this conclusion by the impression which the preaching of the gospel has already produced upon the natives of the country, and by the conversions which have taken place among them. Bigots as these Hindoos are, they yet perceive, that a great change is ere long to take place; and they dread it, while they feel convinced of it. "Our children will all be Christians," said a merchant at Burdwan to me, after hearing my Missionary address; "*we* are too old, and cannot change our religion." Oh that Christians in this highly favored country understood and took to heart, the great events that are passing before us! When the Lord manifests *his arm;* when He says so clearly, so evidently, that one who runs may read it—*The ends of the earth shall see my salvation;*—should we not respond to the announcement, and do His work, and think it the highest privilege to become instrumental in communicating the knowledge of salvation through JESUS, to the perishing heathen?

But in order to help effectually in this great work, we must ourselves live in the enjoyment of the blessings of the gospel. We must first be concerned, that God should reveal his power in our own hearts,

and set us free from sin. Without this no one can be a true, active and faithful friend of Missions.

A person may witness the effects of the gospel in others, without being impressed and influenced by it himself. The heathen who saw the Jews returning from Babylon said in surprise, *The Lord hath done great things for them!* but they nevertheless remained idolaters.

To remain in unbelief, while the outstretched arm of God is bared for our redemption, leaves the unbeliever without excuse, and will only increase his guilt. This will not indeed hinder the accomplishment of the work of the Almighty in bestowing the blessings of his salvation on others; for what mortal can stop the progress of the sun in his course? how much less the operations of Him who is *the light of the world*, the Conqueror *travelling in the greatness of his strength!* But though we cannot thus hinder Him, we can hinder the work of God in our own hearts. Oh, let us see to it that we be of the number of those who not only see the salvation of our God, but long for it, accept of it, rejoice in it, and walk worthy of their high vocation.

II. We now consider in the second place *the exhortation*, grounded on this manifestation of the Divine power; "*Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence.*"

At the time when the captive Jews received the news of their deliverance, another generation had grown up; few of the fathers survived, who

remembered Jerusalem, and its temple which had been levelled with the ground. These few doubtless longed to return, and mourned that the promised deliverance was so long deferred. The others shared only partially in these feelings. Long habit had made them familiar with their burden. They were used to the customs of Babylon, and felt less the pain of a state of captivity. They were settled in communities, had their houses, fields and little comforts. Without much energy of mind, without a warm patriotic spirit, and above all without a living faith in the God of their fathers, many must have felt indisposed to forsake the land, though it was filled with the wicked and profane,—though they were surrounded by those who mocked their faith and blasphemed Jehovah. Such is the power of habit. Cyrus, the conqueror of Babylon, had permitted them to return to their native land. A royal manifesto was proclaimed to that effect; they received every assistance and encouragement to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple; the vessels of gold and silver which Nebuchednezzar had carried away were restored to them for the service of the temple. Nevertheless, many hesitated and would not go back.

What must have been the feelings of those who had faith in GOD, on seeing so many of their brethren preferring the land of their captivity to Canaan! I can imagine the fathers going round and calling upon them in the very words of the prophet; "Depart ye, depart ye; go ye out from hence; this is not your

fatherland; Canaan is your home; why will you dwell any longer among idolaters, these cruel tyrants who have oppressed you for seventy years? Do you not recollect when we hanged our harps on the willows, how they laughed at our sorrow, and in mockery said, Sing us one of the songs of Zion? Brethren, let us go; forsake this cursed land, and return to Zion, where we shall be free and happy and sing a song of praise to Jehovah for his delivering mercies."

The spiritual application is obvious and striking. Babylon signifies the power of darkness,—the enemies of the Church of Christ, and a world that is lying in wickedness. How unwearied, how persevering are the efforts of these, to counteract and destroy all that God has done, and is doing, for the salvation of man! Every sinner who lives for the world, and acts upon worldly motives and principles, is an inhabitant of Babylon, and held captive by the prince of it. Oh, these false principles and evil habits! they stand in direct opposition to the spirit of the Gospel. The carnal mind is enmity against God; and in this state the sinner is lying prostrate under the power of darkness. He is tied and bound by the chain of sin; though in too many instances he may not be conscious of it. *This* is the worst description of slavery. Oh, what has sin made of this world! Dreadful indeed is the power of darkness in those parts of India to which the sound of the gospel has not yet reached. With a firm grasp the enemy is holding his prey, and keeping his wretched subjects in the most degrading

bondage; while they believe that an irrevocable decree has destined them to be, and remain, idolaters; and that it is useless to attempt a change.

Satan exercises a most tyrannical power over the sinner. Sin has a strange delusive effect upon him. He fancies himself to be happy; and yet cannot conceal his misery. The longer he remains under its influence, the more is he blinded, and bewitched by its charms, and the more difficult becomes a separation from its lying vanities. But there are moments, when the veil is removed from his eyes, a feeling of uneasiness steals in upon him unawares, a dread of the future, a groan sometimes rises from the depth of his heart, which speaks louder than words can express,—"Alas I am a slave, and under a bad master!" He looks forward: death is certain. There is an eternity, a judgment, a heaven, and a hell! Oh, how sadly do these thoughts dispel all the imagined happiness of the sinner! God made man for heaven; but without a mind prepared for heaven, he must be miserable.

Imagine a person visiting one of the old fathers in the captivity, and putting the question to him,—"Are you happy here?" "Oh, no," he would answer, "how can I be so in captivity? Look at me; my very appearance bespeaks sadness and sorrow." Suppose a second question, "Do you prefer to stay here, or to return to Canaan? which do you like best?" His answer would be, "Why do you ask me that? Of course I like Jerusalem best; it is the city of the

living God, my beloved home; and this is the place of the enemy, an accursed land."

And can a life of sin be for a moment compared with a life of holiness? or the bondage of Satan, with the service of Christ? and the enjoyment of what an unbelieving wicked world offers, with the heavenly Jerusalem, as it is described to us in the book of Revelation? Shall we not then repeat the prophet's call to *you* my hearers,—*Depart ye, depart ye; go ye out of her:* friendship with her is enmity against God? These deceitful things will ensnare and poison your hearts. Give to God your best affections: you have been captives of sin and Satan long enough. *Let the time past suffice you to have wrought the will of the gentiles.*"

Oh, let us be diligent in the work we have to do. A child of the world cannot be at the same time an heir of heaven. The Israelite remaining in the land of captivity, forfeited his citizenship for ever. Have you taken the pilgrim's staff in your hand, and are you engaged in travelling to the home, the city prepared of God? Then remember the other injunction of the text, "*Touch no unclean thing!*" There are dangers of moral and spiritual defilement in the way of every pilgrim to Zion. Therefore we are so often exhorted to *watch and pray,*—to *keep our garments clean.* The spiritual life of a believer is like a plant of a delicate nature. It thrives only in its own congenial atmosphere. The new creation within may be, and will be, hindered and injured by the contagious

and deadening influence of sin; whenever its withering touch comes near it. Every sin committed by a believer, not only injures his welfare, but is to be compared to a new chain by which the enemy would reduce him again to his dominion. Oh, this call, "*Touch no unclean thing*," should accompany us into our daily life, and prompt us to weigh in the balance of holiness, every action, word and thought, so that we may walk worthy of the name of Christians.

"*Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord.*" Example is the most powerful preacher of the truth; and unless it be confirmed by holiness of life, the most powerful testimony from the minister will not bring conviction, or become effectual in the hearts of hearers. The captivity being ended, the temple was to be rebuilt, and for the service of the sanctuary the Lord would have none other than pure and holy men, though others belonged by lineal descent to the order of the priesthood; yet before they undertook to carry the sacred vessels on their return to Jerusalem, they were to see themselves duly prepared and cleansed from Babylonish defilements. In the same spirit St. Paul exhorts his son Timothy,—*Be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.* What a solemn, what an important lesson to us all who wish to take a part in building the spiritual Zion, who endeavour to convey the precious treasures of the gospel to the heathen! Is it not so my brethren? We can expect the divine blessing on our labours, only in proportion as we are

influenced and prompted by the love of Christ; and as we show forth that love in our life, by our union in holiness with all who love the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, let us ever remember, that the main and grand object of the Church Missionary Society* is to preach HIM as the Saviour of sinners to the heathen, and, by this divinely appointed means, to rescue sinners from perishing eternally. Every thing else, and any other object we may have in view, is comparatively insignificant, and stands in the shade. Relying upon the word and promises of God with simple faith, and waiting upon the powerful co-operation of His Spirit; —this is the only sure and safe ground to expect the Divine blessing. Amidst the trials and disappointments of my missionary labours in India, my chief support and comfort have been the promises, that God will manifest *His* power with the preaching of His Word, and I feel persuaded that nothing else will enable the Missionary to stand his ground; and my greatest encouragement and joy has been, that the Lord IS manifesting his power in the conversion of Hindoos; that our preaching IS blessed to some souls, and the message of Salvation through Christ IS understood and seen by thousands who have heard the truth. The ground has been *prepared* to a large extent in those parts of Bengal and Hindustan, where our brethren have been actively engaged. I would by no means be content to consider the conversions which have already taken place, as a fair criterion of our

* The Society for which this Sermon was preached.

success. Oh no! I look upon the thousands of youths who have received Christian instruction in our schools, and upon the tens of thousands of adult Hindoos who have attended our preaching, and who feel more or less convinced of the truth of the gospel, as instances of more extensive good produced. One thing only is wanted,—a blowing of the heavenly wind upon the dry bones,—the power of the Spirit,—to make the Word effectual in the hearts of those people. Then we shall reap a large harvest.

The inhabitants of Bengal are from various reasons slowly but steadily emerging out of heathenism. English literature, English science, the English language, and the increased intercourse of the Hindoos with Europeans; all these and many other causes are working together to bring about a new state of things. But while the worn-out system of Hindooism is gradually shaken off by the rising generation; while education, literature and other means convert the senseless idolater into a civilized, intellectual and useful being; it becomes us to make increased efforts at this important juncture, to make him a Christian; while hundreds are shaking off their allegiance to Kali and Shiva, we should be ready on all sides to invite them, to entreat them, to embrace the true faith and become followers of CHRIST. And in order to do this effectually, we must have more Missionaries in the field. You cannot expect the work to be accomplished with our present limited number. One labourer cannot at once superintend schools, train up the young converts

to become schoolmasters and catechists, superintend a native congregation, translate books, compose tracts, preach the gospel to the heathen in the vicinity, and make extensive missionary tours to publish the word of life through more distant parts of the country. Now all these, and more than these, are expected of the Missionary in a heathen land, and therefore in a well regulated mission there should be at least five or six Missionaries to fill the different departments. Such a number of effectual labourers we have never had at any of our stations; and I am afraid we shall never have it, unless a larger measure of the Spirit of love and prayer be poured out upon Christians at home, which shall prompt them to aid us more effectually than they have ever yet done. Oh! shall we be left to go on struggling single-handed against the terrible power of Satan? You cannot allow *that*, my brethren, if you remember your calling, your privileges and the unspeakable amount of good you may accomplish. In the church amongst you, *the* LORD *has made bare his holy arm;* and through the church, through your instrumentality, the Heathen are to see the Salvation of GOD. Has he revealed His power and love to us in the gift of his dear SON, and shall we not imitate our heavenly Father, and fulfil His great commission, in revealing that Son of His love to the perishing millions of India? Oh, what a motive for action is before us! Love and gratitude for the most glorious blessing the world has ever received,—these are our motives. Let them move the Christian church to fulfil her

destiny; and heathenism will soon vanish from the earth. The bright beams of the gospel shall dispel all the darkness that is brooding over six hundred millions of our fellow-creatures, and *they shall see the salvation of our* GOD.

Christians, you feel cheered by the society of fellow-believers. It sweetens your trials, it relieves your aching hearts, when you can communicate your feelings with those who sympathise in your sufferings. I do not like much to speak of the Missionary's trials; but I know you would desire him to enjoy this privilege in the trying position he occupies. You would wish him to have at least two or three brethren in his immediate neighbourhood, with whom he could take sweet counsel, with whom he could pray; and who could stand in his place when he was ready to sink.

It has been said by some that a Missionary's life in India is not one of great self-denial. It is true, we have no reason to complain in some respects. All our wants are supplied; and, for temporal objects, the merchant, the soldier and the civilian brave in a great measure the same inconveniences and trials we Missionaries have to undergo. What will man not do for money, honour and renown! In a far better cause, it could be wished that the young ministers, who love their God and Saviour in England, followed the call of the Lord into His great Vineyard. Surely if a hundred of them came forward, ready to be employed as Missionaries to India, Christians in England could not be so hard-hearted as not to provide for them.

However, the great trial to a Christian residing in India is not the climate, though this is sufficiently afflictive; it is not separation from beloved relatives and friends, though this may occasion many a desolate feeling; it is the being surrounded by a moral atmosphere of evil, from which he cannot escape; it is dwelling amongst a people whose character is destitute of all that is good, and distinguished by almost all that is evil. It is this that depresses the spirit, and forces the exclamation and prayer, "*All the foundations of the land are out of course! Arise, O God! judge Thou the earth, for Thou shalt inherit the nations.*"

THE TEN VIRGINS.

Matt. xxv. 1, 2.

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom; and five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

Among the great variety of subjects which our Saviour chose for instructing the people in the things concerning the kingdom of God, we find, upon a close inspection, an admirable order and adaptation for the mental capacities of his hearers. In the beginning of his ministry he preached, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* In his Sermon upon the Mount he proclaimed the laws and statutes which must be observed and obeyed by those who wish to be the blessed subjects of that kingdom; and towards the end of his ministry, he gradually unfolded the future, and gave believers a sight of the great and glorious consummation of His kingdom. If you read the last chapters of this Gospel, you will find that his discourses are all intended to draw the believer's mind to that great and solemn event. That kingdom which, amidst many conflicts with the powers of darkness, was to be established and gradually extended all over the world, will finally be exhibited perfect and pure in glory everlasting.

In its full establishment the Divine goodness and wisdom will appear in the brightest manner. The

humble Christian finds a source of great consolation in this prospect: he need not despair when beholding a world full of darkness, and rebellion against God. This heavenly kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. The heathen may rage, and the people imagine a vain thing; the kings of the earth and the rulers may take counsel against the Lord and against His Anointed; but he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision. Why? Because the Father has appointed Jesus to be King in Zion; and this Jesus is going on conquering and to conquer, till at last all enemies shall be put under His feet.

But there was another great object our Saviour had in view in these solemn discourses. They were intended chiefly to concentrate the spiritual energies of believers upon the accomplishment of that great work, the salvation of their souls. He unveiled before their eyes some of the things which God has prepared for them that love him, in order to raise in their hearts the most ardent desire after them. He repeatedly dwelt in these discourses on the happy state to be revealed hereafter, to make us feel the necessity of an habitual preparedness for his second coming. It is as if we heard Him say: "You are not of this world, even as I am not of this world; you are a chosen generation; you are a royal priesthood, a peculiar people; your home is the new Jerusalem; your inheritance is the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. Let nothing, therefore, hinder you in the great work of your calling; cultivate

a heavenly mind; keep yourselves unspotted from the world; watch against its inroads upon your hearts. Prepare yourselves daily for the great event, that you may be counted worthy to stand before the Son of man."

The subject of the parable before us is particularly calculated to call forth our utmost diligence, in that it points out to us two distinct classes of persons, both apparently preparing for the Lord's coming; but one of them awfully disappointed in the end. May the Lord make the lesson instructive and edifying to us all, by applying it in all its power to our hearts and consciences, through the influence of his good Spirit.

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. In this striking parable we have a representation of the marriage supper of the Lamb, or the union of the Church with her divine Head in his kingdom; and at the same time, it points out in a most decided manner, what every individual member of that church has to do, in order to become worthy of being admitted to a participation of that glorious state.

My friends, when we reflect on the deep humiliation of the Son of God, His labours and sufferings and death,—when we ponder over the fact that He laid down His life and shed His blood, not for His own sins but for the good of man, we may easily infer that by doing and suffering all this, some great

and glorious object was to be accomplished. Yes, an end was obtained thereby that made millions rejoice and sing praises to God. But let us recollect that we now see the blessed fruit of that redemption only in part. By virtue of it the believer is enabled to rejoice in being pardoned; he can glory in tribulation; he finds comfort in trials; he lives by faith and overcomes the world. But all these privileges and blessings are imperfect. While the reconciled soul is enshrined in this body of sin, we suffer and groan; we have to struggle daily with trials and indwelling sin; our most sublime enjoyments are mixed with grief; and while we feel the sweetest delight in communing with God, the tears of sorrow and contrition are in our eyes. Thus we daily find that our redemption is not yet perfected. No: *we live by hope;* and, blessed be God, it is *a hope that maketh not ashamed.* If our faith and hope were only more lively and energetic, and if we lived more above the world, the Lord would make us to see more, and feel more the powers of the future world. JESUS says, Behold! I come quickly, and my reward is with me. At *that time* of the reward, we shall see what he has done and prepared for us. He *now* invites us by his word; He holds out promises of a most animating nature. To intimate His intense affection for His own flock, the Holy Spirit has often represented the Church in the revealed word, as a Bride espoused to Christ. Thus we hear Paul addressing the Church at Corinth, *I have espoused you to one husband, that*

I might present you as a chaste virgin to CHRIST. And Isaiah introduces the Church in the same interesting character,—*I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*

The kingdom of God is likened unto *ten virgins*. Pure, holy and chaste is the character of the Church which Jesus has chosen and redeemed unto himself. The lustre of his holy, meek and spotless character is shining in her. She follows the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. And when He says, "Depart from the sins of the world; touch no unclean thing, take up your cross and follow me;" she willingly hears and is obedient to His voice; for she is His, and He is her Lord, and He, above all others, deserves her affections and obedience. Pure and white is her garment,—the greatest ornament that could have been bestowed upon the faithful.—It is the righteousness of Christ, that perfect righteousness in which the bride of the Lamb will stand fearless and confident before the face of the Judge in that great and awful day. There is no doubt that our Saviour speaks of those in this parable who have become sensible of the value of real religion, those who have felt something of the impression His Word makes upon the heart;—who not only know what they ought to do, but have actually commenced

in good earnest to seek an interest in the blessings of the heavenly kingdom: for it is distinctly stated, that all the ten virgins took their lamps and *went out to meet the bridegroom.*

My dear friends, it shows a hopeful beginning, if the Word of truth has raised serious thoughts of eternity in our souls. It is no little thing if we take up the lamp of faith, with some degree of confidence that Jesus will not permit the spark to be extinguished which He has kindled.

And if in addition we begin to rise and go to meet the bridegroom; if we feel the importance of spiritual things, and prepare for the day of His coming; it evinces a degree of light and inward conviction, yea, and of faith in CHRIST, which may justify a hope, that the good work will be carried on. Oh, may we all thus be apprehended of the Lord! May we all take our lamps to meet the bridegroom!

But, alas! with all these advantages, and with all these momentary impressions and momentary endeavours, all is not accomplished. Could it be thought possible,—would you expect that any of these ten should be found wanting, and finally excluded from the kingdom of heaven? Yet so it was. JESUS has said, five of the virgins were *foolish*, and five were *wise*. Where then, we might ask, was the difference? Were not all of them virgins? Yes, they listened to and accepted the call of the Lord, all *took their lamps*, that is, became apparently religious and pious. None of them belonged to the class of the ungodly, who dis-

pise the means of grace, who read novels instead of the Bible, and turn away from the house of God. No, they all were acknowledged *Christians;* all more or less found sincere interest and pleasure in religion; they knew and read and heard the Word; they were deeply impressed, perhaps mourned and wept for their sins, and seemed to look to Jesus. Nevertheless, five were foolish. And in what did their folly consist? In *that they took their lamps, but no oil in their vessels.* Our fitness for the kingdom of heaven consists, therefore, not in our having lamps, that is, in our assuming the character and profession of Christians, but in our *having vessels with oil.* The wise virgins provided themselves with these, and the foolish did not.

What then signifies the oil in the vessels? It has been explained in different ways. But the most scriptural meaning of it, I apprehend, is the grace, the unction of the Holy Spirit. By that holy *anointing* we receive a saving knowledge of divine things; the Spirit takes the things of Christ and reveals them unto us; by the aid of that divine agency we learn to build on a sure foundation in Christian faith and Christian practice. Religion by this influence becomes life, reality, a holy principle pervading the whole being.

If we have that inward witness and helper, our religion will not be made up of mere feelings and impressions, nor of stated devotions and confessions only; it will enter into our daily life and conversation: it will exercise a sanctifying influence upon our motives and actions; it will be a living above the world,

even while we are surrounded by it; it will prompt us constantly to set our affections on things above, and to wait in hope for that more excellent inheritance, which is laid up for us in heaven.

If we possess that unction of the *Spirit*, my brethren, we become wise unto salvation; and in this, the five foolish virgins were defective. They had the lamp; they also had oil in it; but it lasted only for a short time; they forgot to take vessels filled with oil besides the lamp; and therefore the supply was found insufficient.

It appears they themselves thought all was well at first: it was their presumption and folly to think themselves rich and in want of nothing, when they saw themselves so finely trimmed out in the outset. Oh! how faithfully has the Teacher of hearts depicted here the character of those who are satisfied with the first beginning,—with the outlines of Christianity. They content themselves with a little oil in their lamps; that is, if they at all feel life and light, love and faith, in their souls for a little season. They are not aware that a believer must take grace in addition to grace, out of the fulness of JESUS. They are not very much concerned, if instead of pure oil, a vile crust of earthly mindedness is gradually depositing in the vessel, and the vain bubbles of outward show and inward spiritual pride are filling it to the brim. They forget that God judgeth the *heart*, and that His soul hateth a secret hankering after the world. In short, they have not *true life and spirit:* they may be good and amiable

and outwardly religious; but they belong not to those whom the Lord calls emphatically *his own*, and therefore are unfit for the better resurrection, unworthy of the great honour of being gathered with the first-born into the kingdom.

It is a most solemn declaration when our Saviour says of the progress of the ten virgins, *while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.* Surely it cannot be, that He should delay beyond the appointed season, which the Father in his eternal counsel has arranged with the Son. No, He cannot change or delay. He is true to his promises and threatenings. *One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.* By short sighted creatures alone, (who are of yesterday) the long suffering of the LORD is counted slackness. But so it was that at this time when all should have been life and vigour, and engaged in preparation, the *ten* virgins slept. There must therefore be seasons when the Church is slumbering and fast asleep. And that season clearly appears to be previous to the coming of the Lord. May we not apply the prophecy to our own days, my friends? Yes: the Church of Christ,—I mean sincere Christians, blessed with the most abundant means of grace, —these are, alas! indifferent, yea, very indifferent, very lukewarm and worldly. Where is that life, that love, that self-denying faith, that holiness and decided separation from the world and deadness to it, which are enjoined by Christ and his Apostles, and which so eminently shone in the primitive Churches? It is

true that greater spiritual darkness prevailed in the Church some centuries before us; but it is as true, that those holy men who then constituted the real Church, were burning and shining lights. In these our days, the Church has fine lamps, beautifully polished and trimmed; but look for the *power of godliness;* and you will find that too often the vessel with the oil is wanting.

We may reasonably expect, however, that even in this time of slumber and sleep, the five wise virgins cannot be altogether regardless of their danger. No, while the foolish ones sleep without fear and concern; the wise are easily awaked. If you are disposed to ask, how it be possible for them to sleep at all? I would answer, it is owing to too much fellowship with the world, to their being over-charged with different sorts of secular business, to the cares of this life, to a want of retirement and communion with God in prayer. These and other causes produce that low and lifeless state of mind, in which the energy of faith, the fervour of heavenly affection, the firmness of hope, and readiness for self-denial,—in short all the graces of the Spirit,—are languishing and put to sleep.

But when the darkness was thickest and the sleep deepest,—*at midnight, there was a cry made, Behold! the bridegroom cometh; go ye out and meet him!* And now the sleeping virgins arise: now the slumbering energies of their minds are roused: the great day of the Lord is come; and every one must be ready to meet Him. Now all desire to appear in a proper state. The

lamps are trimmed; and those who are ready proceed to the glorious and solemn scene. But now, when all preparations should be finished, and every one ready to meet the bridegroom in confidence and joy, behold, what confusion and disorder! Not less than half of these virgins discover that their store is spent; they have no oil. Their lamps are burning dim, and at last are extinguished.

They ask for a supply from their wiser sisters; but these have just sufficient for themselves. The moment is lost; the time is spent; and they arrive too late. Oh, my friends, have you once been awakened? Have you once been quickened by grace? Then keep that which you have; and add to your stock, that you may have wherewith to live in time of need, and wherewith to shine, and find your way *when midnight darkness comes*. If you neglect your daily self-examination as to how you will stand before the Bridegroom, your heart will be obscured, your faith will be dead, and your inability to meet the Lord so great, as to confound and terrify you in the hour of His appearance.

In this, particularly, let us imitate the *wise* virgins, that we care for our own salvation, before we preach much to others. Buy the oil and wine of the Gospel first for yourselves, that your souls may live, and that you may not be found wanting. Put nothing off till to-morrow;—"Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might;" for the time is short, and the doors of grace will soon be shut. Disappointment

even in worldly affairs is hard to endure; the cases are frequent when people pine away in the depth of grief and are hurried to an untimely grave, after seeing their hopes of earthly comfort blasted. But how much greater will be the grief of those,—how bitter their pangs of disappointment and remorse,—who, confidently expecting to belong to the number of God's chosen people, will at last be shut out from His kingdom! The five foolish virgins came and said, *Lord, Lord, open to us!* But what must have been their feelings, on hearing His answer,—*I know you not?* Had they been a little more attentive to the inward voice of conscience, they might have discovered that their want of oil in midnight darkness was a culpable neglect; for without burning lamps they could not be true and fit companions of the Bridegroom. The occasion was most solemn and joyful,—but, without due preparation, it was, in the nature of things, impossible that they could be admitted; and, as unworthy, they were shut out. Thus it is, my friends, with the Christian's spiritual state in its declension. When the light of grace is obscured in the soul; when he falls asleep in worldly-mindedness, he will at the same time become presumptuous and deceive himself. He imagines that he has some life in himself, some faith; whereas it is all fancy of his own; he possesses only the appearance of it. Neither are these supplies to be gathered in the moment of danger, when death and judgment are near at hand. Such endeavours are fruitless; and exclusion from the kingdom of Christ

is a punishment due to this state, because there was due warning to prepare in time, but souls would not hear when the Lord called them by His Spirit.

The practical improvement of this subject is given by Jesus himself; *Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day, nor the hour, when the Son of man cometh.* And can there be, my brethren, a more forcible argument to impress on our minds the duty of watchfulness, than the uncertainty of our time, the shortness of our days, and the certain appearance of the Son of man? He *will* come; and he says himself, *Surely I come quickly.* If it be true, as our Saviour so significantly pointed out, that there are seasons when believers and half-believers slumber and are drowned in spiritual sleep, with little to be seen whereby they are distinguished from an unbelieving world, it seems necessary indeed that those who stand on the watch-towers of Zion should call to all within her,—"Do not sleep any longer, ye citizens of Jerusalem! Watch! Midnight is at hand, and the Bridegroom is near!" My brethren, let me therefore most earnestly entreat you to look well to your lamps and your vessels. Search and examine, and be sure whether you possess the oil of faith and love,—whether you have the unction of that Spirit who leadeth into all truth,—whether you possess the true life and spirit of Jesus Christ,—whether you resemble Him inwardly, in holiness, humility and purity; and outwardly, in a life and conduct that attest the indwelling of these heavenly graces?

Watch and pray: make that the great subject of your endeavours at every new turn of life; abound more in these things, and go from strength to strength. Have not only a small supply, but vessels *filled* with oil, and lamps trimmed and burning brightly. The delay of the Lord is as great a stimulus to watchfulness as if he were already coming. Oh, it is dangerous to sleep, dangerous to let our hearts be too much taken up by this world. Every day and every hour is precious for accomplishing the great work of preparation for the day of Jesus.

And you, who, like the foolish virgins, have never obtained the true oil of joy and gladness in its saving supplies—who are satisfied with the garment of religion, and with a lamp only, without the spiritual supplies that are offered—can we say to you, *Watch?* You have nothing that needs to be watched,—nothing to be robbed of;—for Satan himself is satisfied if his followers take up only an appearance of piety. Still I would say, *Watch* against self-deception; awake and repent truly; otherwise the coming of your Lord cannot but be an event of heart-rending misery and disappointment to you.

Be assured, if the Bridegroom come, He will not stay for you till you are ready. You will be left behind; that little measure of oil you fancy you possess will then be spent; your lamp will be extinguished; and you will be left in that darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Think, brethren, of the consequences of losing the heavenly king-

dom. That which your Saviour acquired by so much labour and sorrow,—that eternal kingdom to which He now invites you,—will be lost; and He from whom you expected a friend's welcome will say, *I know you not.* You may perceive from the consideration of this solemn subject, that your final destiny is, as it were, in your own power. This day, yea, at this hour, the Lord sets before you life and death,—a blessing and a curse. Will you not accept life? It is life everlasting that is offered: will you not receive the blessing? It is a blessing for eternity! Oh, let it not be said to you *in that day,* "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hands, and ye have not regarded; therefore will I laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh." May GOD, in his infinite mercy, make every one of you of the number of the wise, for His Name's sake. Amen.

NOAH'S FAITH.

Heb. xi. 7.

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

THE history of man before the flood is shrouded in obscurity. We know little of the social condition of the human family. A few hints are contained in the sacred record, that they derived their support from agriculture and from their flocks; and two of the descendants of Cain distinguished themselves by inventions in brass and iron, and the construction of musical instruments. But we have a much more ample and circumstantial record of their spiritual state; simply because the Bible has chiefly to do with the eternal interests of men, and only incidentally makes mention of the social and political condition of the human family.

Now, with regard to the moral and spiritual state of the world in those primeval ages, it is said, "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually;" so much so, that "it repented the Lord, that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." And again it is said, that "all flesh had corrupted His way upon the

earth:" a sad and mournful testimony, to show how generally and deeply the poison of sin had infected man, who had been created in the image of God.

But a holy seed was preserved in those days of general relapse; and doubtless there were always found a few who continued faithful to their trust and in allegiance to Jehovah. The Apostle mentions three prominent characters, by whom a lively faith in God was exercised, and who shone as lights in the world, among a godless generation in the ante-diluvian ages. These were Abel, Enoch and Noah; the first of whom offered his lamb, a more excellent sacrifice than that of Cain; the second was taken to heaven without seeing death; and the third was the preacher of righteousness to those who perished in the great flood.

Greatly as human life and the mind of man must have differed in all their various aspects and relations, from what they now are; it is very striking to observe, that faith in its exercise towards God was exactly the same in those holy believers, as it is now. I propose to illustrate to you the exercise of faith by Noah's example:

I. In his obedience to the divine warning.

II. How thereby he influenced and condemned the world.

III. How he became an heir of righteousness.

1. Noah's character is presented in Genesis vi. 9, thus: "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations and Noah walked with God:" and he was not for-

gotten by Him. Though a solitary instance of holiness in a corrupt and wicked generation, God remembered him, and selected him for a most gracious purpose. He was to be saved, and to become the progenitor of the human family after the flood, an honoured instrument to preserve and convey the seed-corn of a new animated creation through the deluge. God having decreed to sweep away the whole human race by the tremendous judgment of the deluge, Noah received a warning from Him to build the ark; and he was obedient to the call. It was conveyed in these words:—*The end of all flesh is come before me, and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of Gopher wood;* and then, the dimensions and arrangements of the vessel were carefully specified. *And, behold,* said God, *I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die! But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife and thy sons' wives with thee; and of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee. And Noah did according to all that God commanded him, so did he.* Now one of the characteristic features of Noah's faith in acting up to the command of God, is mentioned in the text: it was exercised with regard to things *not yet seen;* he was to provide against an event very far off; more than a hundred and twenty years; and the accomplishment of which in human estimation appeared impossible. He

was to give all his time and attention to preparation for it. He *might* have reasoned thus,—"How is it possible for a flood to cover the whole earth? If rain should descend for a whole year incessantly, it is not likely that the higher parts will be flooded." But the man who walked before God had learned to bow in humble submission, and to act up to the letter of His command; he knew that this was the safest and the most becoming course for him. And he firmly believed that what Jehovah foretold would come to pass. Happy is the believer who thus believes and acts upon the word of God, who has, like Noah, the fear of the Lord before his eyes! It is because there is so little fear of God in the world, it is because so few parents do bring up their children in this fear and nurture, and agreeably to the divine principle "that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,"—that you find so little real active faith in the world. What a wholesome, delightful influence would be exercised upon society at large, if people in opening the Word of God were habitually impressed with the thought—"God here speaks to me, I will reverentially listen and readily obey His call." Noah had no written volume of inspiration. God then supplied that defect by direct communications imparted to a few holy men who were the pillars of the early Church. God demanded and received the same reverence and child-like submission from Noah, which he demands from you and me.

Again, Noah exercised faith under very trying circumstances. He stood alone. We may take it for

granted that God would not have allowed any families or individuals to perish in the flood, who feared him and walked in his path. But the holy seed of believers had really died out. It must have been a dreadful state of things. Unbridled lust had the sway: they lived entirely for the flesh. Our Saviour says of them; "they did eat and drink, they married wives, they were given in marriage." And they cared for no higher pleasures. God was not in their thoughts. Faith and love had been extinguished.

It was not so bad in former generations. A significant cause is mentioned which helped to bring about this utter falling off and prostration of vital religion. In the family of Seth true piety was preserved and kept up for ages, and hence they were distinguished by the honorable title of *sons of God*. But in Noah's days the distinction was broken down, and the sons of God intermarried with the daughters of men. The consequence was, as it always will be in similar cases, religion and piety died away. A race of unbelievers sprang up and filled the earth. If a pious man or woman is connected in marriage with a worldly-minded or ungodly partner; the pious party will be the sufferer in every respect. And is it at all surprising, if their offspring become irreligious and ungodly? These unnatural connections were the cause of the religious decay and wickedness of the primeval ages; and God saw no other remedy but to destroy the whole race!

Now, brethren, imagine a holy, venerable God-fearing man, living among such a degenerated and

corrupted mass of human beings. Among these Noah was placed alone; mourning and sorrowing over this prevailing decay of all that was good and moral, and all that renders the life of a believer pleasing, happy, and tolerable.

What must have been his feelings when he witnessed his own kinsfolk, the descendants of a pious, holy man, yielding to the evil influence and carried away by the stream of moral corruption! A more trying situation to a good man cannot be imagined. Such an one longs for kindred souls, for companions in his arduous journey, for friends and brethren in faith, with whom he can commune and exchange kindred feelings. Ah! this brings consolation in the hour of need.

Doubtless Noah looked around for a few with whom to sympathize; but he saw none. Perhaps very little of this disposition was found in his own family circle.

Now in such painfully trying circumstances,—to proceed undismayed, unmoved in the path of duty and obedience,—what a strong, what a conquering faith was required! But he did proceed, he went on building and preparing the ark. He was impressed by one great thought; "*The time is short, and the Lord is at hand.*" He was animated by the same feeling as Peter in later days: *We must obey God rather than man!* He knew that what he was engaged in, was for his own safety and the safety of his house.

Again, Noah's faith had doubtless to stand another severe trial. People who have no religion, and who

live to the lusts of the flesh, will not remain indifferent spectators when they meet with instances of piety. They will hate and despise and persecute those who are so unlike themselves. In this respect the world has ever been the same. Though the sacred history passes over this fact in silence, we may rest assured that Noah had to share the same lot with the people of God.

We may imagine the people crowding round the venerable patriarch and asking in mockery,—"What are you about here, in building this enormous structure? Is it intended to serve as a place of refuge for you and your saintly family?" And when in solemn address he informed them of the threatened judgments, and of the Divine command to build such an ark; and when he entreated them to flee from the wrath to come, and turn to God; they would turn it into ridicule, and say,—"Where is your God? we do not wish to serve him; we want a merry and happy life,—and we will enjoy it as long as it lasts! And whence is all the water to come, to lift up your great ship: we advise you, old man, to leave off this foolish work, and not to allow your fancy to trouble you, and paint every thing in the darkest colours!"

Ah, brethren, if you mix among people of sceptical and infidel disposition; what will you not hear against God and religion! It requires not only a strong mind, but a faith like Noah's and Abraham's faith, to remain unshaken in your trust in the great invisible Friend. And if you wish to pass as true pilgrims through

the world, and not to be turned and shaken from your hope, you must arm yourselves with the same spirit and have the same realising sense of God's power and grace.

II. We consider how *Noah by faith condemned the world.* Truth and sincerity are two powerful witnesses; and when a man acts a sincere part in bearing a faithful testimony to God's truth, such a testimony will exercise a great influence for good. What can a holy, consistent, simple-minded follower of Jehovah not effect? How great and beneficial is his influence? Such an example has two effects. It is encouraging and animating to the good and well disposed; who are stirred up to do as he does, by seeing a living instance before them, how difficulties and trials may be borne, and the most arduous duties performed; how that which appeared to them little short of impossible can be performed under the exercise of a lively faith. And then, too, the conviction comes home to the mind of the less experienced,—"Surely it is the religion, it is the faith of this good man, which enables him to do all this; why should not I make use of the same resources and seek for this hidden principle, this faith, by which the world is overcome?" There is a powerful evidence of the truth of religion presented by every instance of faith in lively operation; and the good resulting from it is incalculable.

But in Noah's dreary and gloomy days, there was none of this description, who could be thus influenced.

People were gone so far astray, as to be incorrigible; and so, observe, brethren, in such a case how the example of faith has *another* effect. It condemns the sinners. Those giants in hardened unbelief were shut up against the reception of divine truth; but they could not help seeing and feeling, that Noah was right and they themselves all in the wrong;—that he was a holy man of GOD, and that they were wicked sinners. So far the voice of truth will ever maintain its place. Its testimony cannot be mistaken. When infidels are sunk so deep in folly as to say, "There is no God;" we may tell them plainly, "You lie against your own convictions." When they try to represent vice as virtue and put darkness for light; depend upon it, it is a forced effort against the testimony of their own reason and common sense. It is because they hate God and hate holiness, and love darkness rather than light, that they wish there were no God and no religion, no heaven and hell; therefore they dispute and laugh and mock and rave wildly, while a voice within unmistakeably tells them, that the Judge is before the door. This was the mind and disposition of the antediluvian race. Noah's piety and holy life condemned them. Even while the profligate sinners pretended to disbelieve, they felt the reality of his God and his religion. They were very hardened in gross darkness like Pharaoh; but a flash of light sometimes gleamed through their mental obscurity; and they must have been forced to admit the fearful alternative,—"If this man's faith is real,—and he looks thoroughly in

earnest,—we are in a dreadful and dangerous condition." The smallest ray of light when piercing through a sinner's conscience has the effect of condemning his darkness. Noah's faith was an active faith: he went on building the ark, warning the sinners of the wrath to come, because God had commanded it; and every plank he fastened on the sides, and every nail he drove home, and the very sound of the hammer and axe, must have been like so many voices crying out against them, testifying to their ungodliness and guilt. And as the gigantic structure rose in all its grandeur before their eyes, it frowned upon them as a threatening witness, foretelling the awful day of retribution and the reward of God's faithful servant being at hand.

But the solemn warning had no effect. Like as in a dark stormy night, when the lightning casts a lurid glare around, the objects which become visible for a moment, are forthwith shrouded in denser darkness; so is the sinner's mind when turned from God. So were Noah's deluded contemporaries more hardened after every fresh warning, and plunged deeper into sin. God sent them these warnings by his faithful servant; but they were left unheeded; and a more determined unbelief, and a more rancorous hatred against truth and him who bore witness to it, were the natural result; and they hastened to their final doom.

My brethren, God in his infinite mercy has left us a powerful testimony to the truth of his Word, of his promises and his threatenings. Through this revelation

and providential leadings and the faithful preaching of His Gospel, unbelievers, sceptics, indifferent professors who care little or nothing about religion, have no excuse. If their imagination is vain and evil; if their plans and objects are calculated exclusively for time and sense; if they have no eyes to see the beauty of holiness, and their view is engrossed with what mammon and the deities of their worship promise; it is not because GOD has made them so; it is not because their immortal spirit finds satisfaction in earthly sand and rubbish; but it is because of their deliberate refusal of that which is good and excellent and precious. Depend upon it, the unbeliever is condemned again and again by his own heart before he is finally destroyed!

III. My text states in the third place, *Noah became an heir of the righteousness which is by faith.* The simple child-like faith in God, which prompted Noah to act in humble obedience to God's word, was followed by a gracious reward even in this life. Such a faith is most pleasing to God, because He is acknowledged and glorified thereby. Such a faith has a right to all the blessings promised in and through CHRIST. GOD promised these to the fathers by the Messiah who was to come; and though they were called away from the scene of their conflict long before His coming, still all the merits of Christ, acquired by his sufferings unto death, became their portion and inheritance. Their faith had always a reference to CHRIST; and they obtained the salvation of their souls from the same

source from which believers under the New Testament derive their salvation. This fountain of life and peace is the *righteousness of God which is by faith in Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe.* Faith in God is not the *meritorious* cause of our salvation, but it is the *instrumental* cause of it; it accepts and appropriates what the Son of God expiring on Calvary procured for sinners; but then it becomes an active principle, it moves the believer to work out his salvation with fear and trembling. Noah was thus moved by his faith to work at the ark; and he laboured with diligence, so that it was finished in the time appointed. And his labours in faith were the clearest evidence of his being a righteous man, an heir of the eternal merits and redemption of CHRIST. There is a great difference between the man of faith who seeks his safety and life in the way of God's appointment, and the man of no faith who seeks his safety and life in a way of his own. God has decreed to save the world by the merits and death of his Son. The world finds fault with this plan, and the doctrine of the Cross is to the Greek foolishness, and to the Jew a rock of offence.

My brethren, the Church of Christ is the ark into which we must go for safety. Let us enter in the obedience of faith into her gates, and save our souls alive; for another deluge, more fearful than the first, is to come. This figure of Noah preparing the ark is very striking. Thus we must each of us make our safety sure in God's own way *with fear and trembling.*

He that heareth Jesus' words and doeth them, is likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock; and when rains descended and winds blew, it still stood firm.

I would much rather follow Noah's example in bearing a faithful testimony for my God, though it be at the risk of the world's dislike, scorn and contempt, than take the part of the unbelievers, and be overwhelmed in the flood. I would much rather be considered by them a fool and a mad enthusiast, for the exercise of my faith in CHRIST, than make their worldly wisdom my rule of life; *because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

While we admire the heroic faith of Noah under protracted and painful trials, let us thank God, that with the brighter light of the Gospel, we enjoy privileges from which he was entirely debarred. God was his only friend, and all the world was against him. If therefore you enjoy Christian fellowship with those who know and worship the same Lord, make the best use of it you can, for your spiritual growth and comfort. But beware of one serious mistake which is very common. People who are surrounded with Christian privileges, find it pleasant enough to speak the language of Canaan and sing the songs of Zion; but their faith is more the faith of the Church than their own, just because it has not been exposed to trial. One year's exposure to Noah's dreary, painful position,—one year's standing and wrestling alone,

amidst all outward discouragement,—and oh, how little of their sentimental faith would remain under the rude stormy blast! Noah's practical faith must be wrought into the soul by a process of fiery trials and temptations.

And if you have no faith, no solid Christian principle, none of that humble submissive obedient disposition so beautifully shown forth in Noah's life;—if you rather resemble the ante-diluvians, in their carnal, worldly principles and practices,—no God, no heaven, no eternity; and therefore no faith, no repentance, no holiness;—let me ask you to read the history of the flood,—to read it carefully, and draw a strict line of comparison between Noah, the one solitary instance of a God-fearing man, and the millions of men of nature around him,—men of unbridled lust, giants in unbelief. And would you cast in your lot with these—and eat and drink, and make plans, and boast and laugh, and scorn God's message of mercy, and at last be overwhelmed in the flood—in the burning gulf? This is the course of sin; and so goes the world to this day, though it be a more refined and civilised world! But does not conscience sometimes upbraid? does it not speak of responsibility, of guilt, of a fearful retribution? Do not Noah and Abraham and Moses and CHRIST condemn such even now? Yea, when they happen to meet with a holy pious person, does not his example condemn them? Do they say it would be unmanly to give way to fear? A time will come when they will feel dreadful misgivings, and the ground will sink under

them. When the flood came, and those who had mocked Noah, saw him safe in the ark, while they in vain scrambled up the rocks and climbed the highest mountains, they wished to be as he was, and where he was; but it was too late. My brethren, if you respect and love your Bible, do not allow a man of loose religious principles to come between you and your faith. Young people especially I would caution to shun irreligious persons like a pestilence. Retreat, in most cases, is much safer than entering upon discussions; for the unbeliever has his arguments all ready. He has found it necessary to fortify his mind against God's truth; and he will try to bring you down to his own level. Keep separate, like Noah; and maintain your own ground.

We in this country* are like Noah, placed among a countless mass of fellow-beings who know not the true God! We all know what one good man, whose walk is that of a Christian, whose life is a pattern of purity, truth and benevolence,—may effect by his influence. We have had splendid instances of it; especially in the dark and dreary days at the beginning of this century, when good men were very few and had to encounter many of Noah's trials. Few as they are even now, what results might not be expected, if each occupied Noah's position among the Hindoos? if each *contributed* his share towards building the ark of Christ's Church for the salvation of man? Noah gave up all he had for his God, and was

* Bengal, 1851.

a preacher of righteousness. But it was chiefly his life and example that bore a powerful testimony. Such witnesses are wanted in India; men of active, self-denying faith.

Let me once more remind you that a splendid reward awaits all such in heaven. If, like Noah, we are heirs of Christ's righteousness now, like him we shall be heirs of glory.

This earth with all the works that are therein shall be destroyed by fire; but do you, according to God's promise, "look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." And if, beloved, ye look for such things, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness? Let us, therefore, be diligent, that we may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless.

ABRAHAM'S FAITH IN OFFERING ISAAC.

Heb. xi. 17—19.

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

WHY is there so much suffering in the world?—How often has this question been raised! and yet how frequently do people remain utterly ignorant of the reason, at the very time when it were most desirable that they should be well acquainted with it! The simple reply is this: Our heavenly Father's object is to produce faith, where there is none; to strengthen and increase it, where it exists; and to revive it, where it is waxing feeble and ready to die.

Now faith is begotten, increased and revived, not in the bright sun-shine of earthly prosperity, but in the rugged and arduous path of adversity. In prosperity when we have all we desire, and enjoy all we love and delight in, we generally want no more; and the higher, superior blessings of grace are lost sight of; we are satisfied with the creature. And this is the negative of faith; it is the death of faith; it is the turning of the heart from God.

Now to prevent this dead state being our's, God in mercy takes away what we love, and puts upon us what we dislike and feel painful; or He turns the

source of our pleasures into a cause of grief and suffering. The natural effect of crosses and disappointments in selfish man is restlessness, discontentment, a rebellious rising of the spirit, or sullen despondency.

But then comes the Word of God, and a still small voice within says to the sufferer,—Go to your Heavenly Father, tell Him your grief, and ask Him for relief and comfort.

If the broken-down sufferer is prepared to listen to this call, and follow it, he will be a great gainer. Faith will come into operation; and a hopeful light will spring up in his sadness and obscurity. If he do not listen, and if he seek for earthly stays and comfort, the trial will produce an opposite effect. It will harden him more, and drive him further away from his God.

A Christian who has learned to exercise faith, receives additional strength; and he becomes a strong and approved believer. Such a man was Abraham. His history shows that the richest blessings follow upon the sharpest trial of faith. We consider

I. How his faith remained firm under the greatest trial.

II. What was the great support of his faith.

III. How his faith was rewarded.

I. *The great trial of Abraham's faith.* God, according to his promise, had given Abraham a son in his old age. His heart's desire, so long delayed, was now gratified; and seeing the beloved one grow up, he

felt happy and satisfied, and could look forward with composure and calmness to the day when he should be gathered to his fathers. The repeated assurance from God that he should be the father of a great nation, and that his offspring should be like the sand of the sea innumerable, would naturally lead him to believe, that thereby the life and safety of his son were secured, and that God himself was engaged for his protection. Yet how different were the leadings of God from his prospects and expectations! The sacred historian thus records the trial of his faith:—*It came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.* What must have been his feelings, on listening to this divine command! It was like a thunderbolt descending from the unclouded sky. Could human nature, could a paternal heart, experience a more terrible shock? It was a dark, a mysterious dispensation. "Is it possible that God can act such a part, and make a demand, in human estimation so cruel, and abhorrent to human nature?" I feel persuaded Abraham's thoughts were exercised in this manner, after listening to the voice of the Almighty. For, in this instance, nature's best and most sacred affections were to be subdued and crushed and sacrificed with the beloved object. The question stood in all its solemn reality before his mind: "Canst thou

still believe God to be thy Father? Canst thou submit in faith to this dreadful command? Not only to give up that which is dearest to thy heart, but to be the instrument of the execution, and slay thy beloved son with thine own hand? Canst thou still believe in God, when all reason's power comes short, and the *why* and *wherefore* cannot be discovered?" Ah! what a conflict between faith and reason, between duty and affection, must have passed in Abraham's mind! And the result was such as will redound to his honor, and render his name as the father of the faithful imperishable. Nothing remained for him to lay hold on, as far as reason could stretch its powers. He could not understand why God should remove his beloved; but he held fast one thought—He is my GOD and I am his servant. I cannot at present understand his object and designs; but shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? That which appears to me death and destruction, may in the end prove the reverse; and He can bring good out of evil! My whole being is bowed down before the awful mandate; I am crushed like a worm in the dust;—yet—I will honour Him by submission, I will be still and know that He is God.—Thus Abraham waited on his God and acted up to the Divine command.

My brethren, where there is a Divine command, obliging us to obedience; it is the wisdom and duty of faith to close its eyes against all insuperable difficulties and dangers. That believer will never be a loser, who follows Divine directions and humbly submits to

Divine dispensations. Our heavenly Father frequently hides from our eyes, and always with a good and kind intention, the reasons why the dearest objects are sometimes removed by a sudden stroke from our side. He does not explain His actions; He does not immediately throw light upon His dispensations; because He is God, and we are his poor dependant creatures; and it is our part to say:—"Here I am, do with me as it seemeth good in thy sight." These are the highest lessons of faith. When our earthly supports and joys and treasures are removed; when one sheltering cherub after another is taken away; and we stand alone, helpless, naked in God's creation, poor and deprived of all; *then* the words come to be realised: "Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed." To pass through such a process unhurt, requires much prayer, much earnest crying to God: "Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me! Help me! I am thine!" Thus did Abraham. Thus did Jacob wrestle with God, until the day dawned and the sun rose at Peniel! And the retrospect on such seasons is very satisfactory, very delightful; for thus the believer grows up to spiritual manhood.

We cannot help admiring the readiness with which Abraham proceeded, in doing as God had commanded him. He rose up *early in the morning, and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and, accompanied by Isaac, went to the place of which God had told him.* There was no hesitation, no delay. Not a word of murmuring escaped his lips. In solemn meditation and

inward prayer he approached mount Moriah! And who can read without lively sympathy the short and affecting dialogue that passed between father and son! "My father," said Isaac, "behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering." And God did indeed provide a sacrifice and a burnt-offering far more excellent and valuable than seemed to be anticipated at that moment! And Abraham was presently permitted to receive a glorious sight of it, when the typical sacrifice had been accomplished.

The inward conflict which a believer has to pass through, when a heavy affliction is *before* him, is generally much heavier to bear than the trial itself. When we have come to the full consciousness that the Lord is demanding an offering—that he is saying: "Give me that which is most dear to thy heart," ah! then, what agonies, what fears, what distraction of mind! It is sometimes a death struggle,—all darkness, horror, and no ray of consolation and hope. Such was the agony of Christ at Gethsemane. And Abraham tasted of this cup, during the three days that passed from the moment of his receiving the Divine command, to that when he reached the memorable place, where the sacrifice was to be offered up.

But when this inward conflict was over, he probably felt some comfort, something of the peace of God in his heart. Hope seems to have been predominant; and this is the immediate reward of God's faithful

children. He does not allow them to be overwhelmed by the dark billows of affliction. After the conflict, the fear and horror were passed. Abraham could say, "I am ready to do thy will, and to drink the bitter cup." With a calm mind and with a firm step, the great believer proceeded right onward to the execution of the Divine command. He built his altar, laid the wood in order, bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood; and *he stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son.*

The act of faith was over. The sacrifice was, in the sight of God, as good as accomplished. This was enough. More was not required for the trial of his faith. *And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham, lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.* And thus the day of death and sorrow was turned into a day of deliverance and life and joy. Now it was that Abraham could understand the reason why he was thus tried. *Now* he saw that there was unspeakable mercy mingled with judgment. *Now* light sprang up in his soul, with comfort and joy, which made him forget the bitterness of the trial; for it had produced the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Satisfaction and joy are the feelings in exercise when a tried believer is permitted to see the blessed effect of his affliction, when he discovers that it was loving-kindness and mercy which presented to him the bitter cup; and

that the fruit growing out of it is more precious than gold; forasmuch as it has assimilated him to the likeness of God; made him feel more a stranger in this world, and more desirous for a better.

II. We consider, *secondly, what was the chief support of Abraham's faith.* If we enquire for the hidden source, wherein lay the strength of Abraham's faith, it was this:—He believed that God was *a God of the living*, and, according to the Apostle's declaration, though he was called to offer up his son, he *accounted that* GOD *was able to raise him from the dead:* and this conclusion he drew from the words, *In Isaac shall thy seed be called*—in other words—"The promises of temporal and spiritual blessings given to thee and thy seed shall be realised in the offspring of Isaac." Now here the Apostle gives us an insight into the highly spiritual character of his faith. He took it for granted that a highly favoured and blessed nation would descend from him: and he argued in this way, "Since my beloved son is to be offered up, and yet the promises are to be realised in *Isaac's seed*, God may and will raise him to life again; for to Jehovah all things are possible." Abraham then was a believer in the resurrection of the dead; and in this respect he had clearer views than many of those who came after him. The fact is this, my brethren; Abraham received those clear decided views of Gospel light and hope, by his constant walk with God and eminently holy life. He meditated on every promise and stored the Word of God in his heart. He discovered in

what God revealed to him, a heavenly attraction which raised his mind far above the world. My brethren, a decided and sincere believer in the Word of God, has even now the same distinguished privilege. Abraham's hope is to be *our* hope, and Abraham's God is to be our God. When Paul was in tribulation for the Gospel,—when he despaired of life and had the sentence of death in himself,—he found consolation and peace in the same blessed truth, namely, the assurance that God was able to deliver him from death. In the same faith he desired to be "absent from the body and present with the Lord." "I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life of the world to come." The body which is burned to ashes, and the flesh which worms consume, and the bones which moulder and are turned to dust, shall rise again. The dust shall be collected; and God will make it a new and incorruptible body, fit for heavenly felicity. This faith has a wonderful power to raise the mind above the suffering and the sorrow and the sacrifices and the crosses of the present moment. If the present trial of faith has this blessed effect; if the creature sinks into the back ground, and the realities of the invisible world are apprehended, laid hold of, delighted in; if free from idolatrous affection, which formerly captivated the heart, the soul seeks and finds her rest and peace habitually in Abraham's God, the incarnate Jehovah, Jesus Christ; then the great victory is gained; then the gracious intentions regarding our trials are realised; then comes the great promised

blessing :—*Because thou hast done this thing, and not withheld thy son, thine only son, therefore in blessing I will bless thee.* Such a believer receives a seal from the Lord : he is sealed unto the day of redemption, and has the assurance, that all will be well in the end.

III. *Abraham's reward of faith.* He received his son who was as good as dead, not only alive, but as one who had not seen death. This was a precious gift which he had not expected ; for the utmost stretch of his hopes had been, that God was able to *raise him from the dead.* But God gave him back his beloved son unslain. And oh ! how would he press him to his heart, and how would his heart overflow with gratitude ! But an important point is thus expressed ; *he received him in,* or, *for a figure.* Abraham received him as a type of Christ. There seems little doubt, that at that overwhelmingly joyful moment, GOD communicated to Abraham the fact, that the whole transaction just terminated, in which he had been the chief agent, was an emblem and type of a more glorious event to take place on the very same spot, viz. the Death and Resurrection of the SON OF GOD. It has been sometimes supposed that the words of Christ, *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad !* had reference to the day when Abraham offered up his son and again received him alive. God then shewed him, that JESUS CHRIST was to die a sacrifice for the sins of the world on Calvary ; and he received a clear though distant view of the stupendous work of man's redemption by the Lamb of

God and Son of God; and the sight made him rejoice. A man of his faith and love to God, must indeed have rejoiced to see a remedy in preparation, by which sin and the curse were to be removed, and the human family restored to God and heaven.

Thus also Abraham's posterity, the true Israelites, who were looking in hope for the promised Deliverer, possessed a striking type of the sacrifice of the only begotten Son of God, in Abraham offering up his son Isaac. It was a most apt emblem of that great sacrifice. Isaac was the only son of his father: so was Christ. Isaac bore the wood to the brow of the hill, on which he was to suffer death: so did Jesus bear his cross to Calvary. Isaac voluntarily went to death, and suffered himself to be bound: and, *as a lamb led to the slaughter is dumb, so Messiah opened not his mouth.* Isaac's deliverance was equal to a resurrection; and as Abraham rejoiced when loosing Isaac's bonds of death, so there was joy in heaven and in the Church below, when, on the morning of the resurrection, the Lord was loosed from the bands of death, and stood conqueror over the open grave! And, once more, when the beloved son of the patriarch was restored, God gave him a fuller and more distinct promise of great abundant blessings, than he had received before; the greatest of all being this,—*In thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice.*—The promise of this universal blessing rested upon the typical death and resurrection of his son! And oh! how gloriously has this been rea-

lised in CHRIST! *Because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and because he bare the sins of many, therefore the blessing of Abraham is come through Him upon the nations. He shall see his seed; he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.*

How strikingly and beautifully is the greater act on which the world's salvation rests, illustrated in this solemn typical transaction, which took place nearly two thousand years before the advent of Messiah; and how vividly must the narrative of this story have pourtrayed before the mind of many a believing Israelite the great object of his hopes and desires! Considered from Calvary's hill, the offering of Abraham reflects perfect wisdom, goodness and mercy upon the character of Jehovah. And so it always will be. The most mysterious events which puzzle and distract the weak and unbelieving mind, will justify the perfection of all God's attributes, when we shall be permitted to see the beginning and the end of our trying dispensations.

Now, my brethren, forasmuch as our heavenly Father does even now adopt the same principle with his beloved children, as he did with Abraham, in order to try their faith and to increase it; let us make up our minds and prepare for similar trials. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" said Jesus to his penitent disciple. So he says to us; "Do you love me more than your wife, or husband, or children, or the

good things of this world?" Be not too quick with an answer; for He will put your faith and love to the test. Abraham stood it most manfully: Peter could freely reply, *Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.* It was because both had the root and matter of a living faith in them. When God in Jesus is uppermost in our heart, we need not fear. Grace will carry us through the sharpest trials, and though nature may shrink under the bitter discipline, and we are made most keenly to feel our weakness by the bereavements of life, we shall still be enabled to say,—*When I am weak then I am strong; in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.*

But *faith* is a rare plant, and does not thrive in nature's barren soil. Where do you find a faithful Christian, a self-denying Christian? How few possess Abraham's practical faith! Brethren, be not deceived; God is not mocked. What is the reason, when troubles come in like a flood, when God demands an offering, a burnt-sacrifice, when he removes a beloved partner or child, or when other losses are sustained, why is it that people lament and sorrow without hope, and become wretched and give themselves over to unrestrained grief, and seem to feel as if all were lost, and as if there were no more a God in heaven? The reason is unbelief. There is no active faith in God. There is no realising His truth, His grace, His presence. It is because the Gospel is not in the heart in its power and consolation. And as that

place which belongs to God has been occupied by idols, therefore it is that when the idol is cast down from its place, all happiness and peace have fled. Now such people have still to learn the first lesson of faith: and it is this,—*Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted in the earth. Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon him while He is near.*

Brethren, ask yourselves this question: "What do I give up for my God? What sacrifice have I made of my selfishness, of my ease, of my peculiar propensities, in order to honour him? to show that he has the first place in my estimation?" Ah, brethren, He sometimes comes and takes away by a sudden stroke of death or misfortune, what people like best; just because they will not remember and act up to their obligations, nor deny themselves; and will not give Him even the tenth part of what he has given them. And yet there is mercy in the chastening rod. He takes away our Isaac, in order to show us our idolatrous propensities, our poverty in spiritual riches, our vain notions of comfort, security and happiness; and to prepare the heart for the reception of a more excellent good. But few can understand the ways of God.

Look at the superior position of a believer in trials. He has a foundation to stand upon. He has certain consolations to look to. He goes to his closet and prays, and his soul is supported and refreshed. There is no better way to enjoy the continuance of earthly comforts and blessings, than the habit of resigning them up to God; and enjoying them in God. Abra-

ham received back his Isaac with a great blessing and benediction. Oh, if we did thus receive and enjoy our common blessings as coming direct from the hand of God, then there would be no sin in them, but real pure enjoyment.

Lastly, Abraham saw Jesus Christ from afar; and he rejoiced. *We* can behold Him near. Unto us it is given to view Him more evidently set forth in His sufferings and death, and as a glorified Redeemer living and reigning for us! Let us keep HIM in view. Let us ever be looking to HIM. This is the way to strengthen faith; to go on well from strength to strength; to overcome sin; and to remain faithful to the end.

MOSES' FAITH IN MAKING HIS CHOICE.

Heb. xi. 24—26.

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

When God appoints a man for some extraordinary and important service, in order to advance the great designs of his kingdom, He previously puts him into a situation most suitable to prepare him for his future duties and trials. Thus we see that Moses, a man who was destined to become the leader and religious law-giver of God's people, received his education and training at the court of the king of Egypt, the country most advanced in those ancient days in the arts and sciences of civilised life.

When the young shepherd who was tending his father's flock on the hills of Bethlehem, had been selected by the choice of God, and anointed by the prophet, to become king of Israel; he was soon after by providential direction called to spend a time in the presence of royalty, to become the captain of a band, and to go in and out before the people. Thus David received his training for that eminent position, which he was afterwards called to occupy. It was

through circumstances, which appeared purely accidental, that both these remarkable men, who acted so important a part in connection with God's ancient people, were brought from a state of obscurity to one of high distinction. A little babe was found by the daughter of Pharaoh lying in a basket of bulrushes on the banks of the Nile. She felt a lively interest in the foundling, and adopting him, Moses had the unexpected fortune of being brought up in Pharaoh's house. By some similar accidental turn it happened, that one of king Saul's attendants heard the young shepherd David playing upon the harp, and he was recommended by him to his master, as a suitable person to dispel his melancholy feelings by his musical skill, when the evil spirit came upon him. Thus by bringing these remarkable men into a higher position, God prepared them, through a series of trying events, for carrying out the great designs of his kingdom.

Again, we perceive in their case as in many others, that God adopts with his chosen servants, a course of spiritual training which is any thing but pleasant to flesh and blood. Moses must have known and felt in some measure in his fortieth year, when he was comparatively a young man, that he was chosen to be the deliverer of Israel; for as to his slaying the Egyptian who wronged an Israelite, it is said, "he supposed that his brethren would have understood, how that God by his hand would deliver them, but they understood not." It is very probable that Moses thought the hour of his promotion to this high

office, and of Israel's deliverance, had then arrived; instead of which, he had to fly, and to live forty years in humble retirement in the wilderness of Midian, before the long-desired day of deliverance arrived.

When Goliath the Philistine had been slain, and God gave a great victory to Israel, it is very likely that David, in returning amidst shouts of joyful acclamations and the songs of the Israelitish women, "Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands," fancied the hour of his elevation to the throne was near at hand; for Samuel had anointed him some time before as king of Israel. But he had first to pass through many a bitter trial, before the crown that had fallen from Saul's head was presented to him. It is a well known fact, that the most eminent men, chosen by God for high and important services, have had to pass through a course of deep—very deep trials, before God thought fit to place them in the high position for which they had been destined. And it is those who have stood the trial of faith well, whom God has deemed worthy of the highest honours.

In my text the faith of Moses is placed before us, as shown by the highest degree of noble self-denial, under the most alluring temptations. The Apostolic statement opens before us some interesting features of the private history of his mind, a truly spiritual mind, which was influenced by the purest motives—the highest principles of love and faith.

The text exhibits three important matters of observation.

I. THE CHOICE OF MOSES.

II. THE MOTIVE WHICH PROMPTED HIM TO IT.

III. THE RESULT WHICH HE EXPECTED.

The testimony which the Apostle gives of Moses in these few lines, leads us to the conclusion that he was indeed a man of God; one of the most perfect characters that have appeared in the history of the world. Show me a man among the best and noblest minds that heathen Greece and Rome produced, who acted as Moses did, and under similar circumstances declined to accept what he refused; and cheerfully submitted to bear and endure, as he did, the deepest reproach. When the great Macedonian conqueror paid a visit to Diogenes, he called out: "If I were not Alexander, I should like to be Diogenes." Was there not as much of pride in the ascetic as in the monarch? and what was the merit or virtue of a man, who sat in stoic self-complacency in the sun, above that of many proud fakirs who practise the same self-mortifications, and are with all that, about the worst specimens of the human race, in a moral point of view. My brethren, that which determines the value of an action is its motive and intention.

If a man encounters arduous trials and self-mortifications with a selfish end in view, what thanks does he deserve for it? But if you see a man undergoing every sort of self-denial and sacrifice because God has called him to it, suffering from a humble desire to please and glorify his God, faith

in his Almighty invisible Father being his great principle of action, then, I say, he is a man who may be held up to our admiration and imitation.

The text says, "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." There is very much implied in these few words: he declined to accept what very few people, if placed in similar circumstances, would be disposed to give up, and what numbers are most eager to obtain. It is said in the short narrative of the earlier years of Moses, that when the child was grown, and weaned by his mother, she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. Moses, therefore, grew up as the recognised son of a royal princess, and when he attained to manhood, a splendid prospect in life opened before him. The alluring pleasures and enjoyments of high life, the distinguished honours which are willingly paid to an individual who enjoys the favour and confidence of royalty, all the sweet and charming things which are to be met with at the court of a powerful king, were within his reach. He had only to please his kind protectress and be careful to keep himself in her good graces and favour, and his fortune was made! And as he was mainly indebted to her for the preservation of his life and all the superior advantages he enjoyed, reason as well as policy would suggest, that it was his duty as well as his interest to show his gratitude by attaching himself to his royal benefactress.

On the other hand, Moses felt and knew that he was

an Israelite, that Abraham the friend of God was his ancestor, that Jehovah had given great and cheering promises to the descendants of Israel. But then he saw his brethren in a depressed state of slavish servitude, and groaning under the yoke of a tyrant ruler. What was he to do? What party was it proper to espouse? If he consulted carnal interests, it required not a moment's hesitation to come to a determination. But Moses looked beyond the gaudy glittering of royal pomp and the fascinating pleasures of a princely life at court: he had the fear of God before his eyes: he had the welfare of his soul at heart: and he regarded not only his own good and happiness, but he longed for the deliverance and prosperity of his brethren according to the flesh. Therefore when he had attained to manhood, and made his choice as to his future path through life, he refused henceforth to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter: his resolution was, "I will be an Israelite and not an Egyptian; a humble follower of Jehovah rather than a base idolater, with the honours and titles of royalty about me." And here I would direct your attention to an important circumstance: Moses formed this determined resolution, *when he was come to years.* Young people seldom are decided in their religious views and principles; though nothing can be more delightful, than to see here and there a pleasing instance, where the early blossoms of youth in all their freshness are consecrated to the service of Jesus. But when a man is going forth on the path of life, setting out on his own

independent course,—ah! that important juncture is the time when the great resolve should indeed be made, the vital choice between Pharaoh's house and Israel's dwelling,—God or the world,—"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Moses came to his decided resolution "by *faith*." It has struck me in thinking on this subject, that the place where Moses lived, and the society among which he moved, must have been very unfavourable to the development and exercise of faith in the true God. You know true religion is rarely found at the court of royalty, and least of all at the court of an idolatrous king. There Satan has his throne and reigns supreme. How then was the tender plant of faith reared and fostered in the mind of Moses? As God always acts by means and instruments in his purposes, by what instrument was this lively faith in Jehovah implanted, nourished and kept in such vigorous exercise? I come to the conclusion, that it was his mother, a pious, godly parent, a true mother in Israel, who trained up the child, and instilled this precious principle into his heart. And God blessed her efforts, and when the son was grown up, she had the joy to behold her anxious and affectionate labour for his spiritual good amply rewarded. Oh what an encouragment to pious mothers, who desire and pray to see their sons when come to years, choosing for themselves the best portion, the one thing needful!

After considering how Moses refused the glories of the world, we come now to see, *what he chose to ac-*

cept. The Apostle says, he chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Oh, what a glorious choice and decision he made! I would counsel all, and young people especially, to look at this example. Moses at this time probably did expect, possibly he confidently believed, that God would give deliverance and salvation to his people, and make a great and highly favoured nation of them; still he was fully aware that if he gave his choice to Israel, in preference to Egypt, affliction in abundance would be his future portion. He had the proof before his eyes. Honour, wealth, respectability, refinement in taste, and good society, were only to be found with the Egyptians: hard bondage, contempt and grinding oppression, were the lot of Israel!

We all know that an enslaved nation is, as a matter of necessity, in a low, debased, grovelling mental condition. In such semi-barbarous society, little or no enjoyment could be found by a man of refined taste, of vigorous mental powers and first-rate acquirements.

The choice which Moses made, required therefore no small personal sacrifice; in fact it was giving up all that a man most highly prizes, and giving it up for life. Yet he did not allow himself to be hindered; he willingly gave up all; for he knew and felt, that Israel's portion was after all the best and richest portion.

The Apostle places this "suffering affliction with

the people of God," in contrast with the good things he might have had in Egypt, "the *pleasures* of *sin*." Moses looked upon what was laid before him with the eye of faith: therefore he saw *sin* in the pleasures of Egypt. This is what he did not like, and what he did not relish! He sought for pleasures and happiness, but such only as are of a pure, spotless kind, such as do not compromise a religious man's principles, such pleasures as do not pollute the soul and wound the conscience. He looked and considered, and he clearly saw, that Egypt's pleasures were all mingled with sin. Can grapes be gathered from the thorn-bush, or figs from a bramble? Ah, brethren, Egypt's pleasures are dangerous sport: they are Satan's fuel: remember that they last only *for a season;* and sorrow and remorse and death eternal are their consequences.

II. We consider *the motive which prompted him to this choice*, and this was very remarkable: "*he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt!*" The Apostle illustrates the history of this man of God, if I may say so, with the lamp of the Gospel in his hand; for he speaks of "the reproach of Christ." Moses' faith was concentrated in Jehovah; and we know that Jehovah in the Old Testament who spoke to the fathers, is the same who appeared in later days as the incarnate Son of God. Now there is something like contradiction in this remarkable sentence: "Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of

Egypt." Many would say, he made indeed an unfortunate exchange. Egypt was the most wealthy and most fertile, most civilised country in those days. All that was gratifying to the senses, agreeable to the views and wishes of the carnal mind, yea, and all that was interesting and fascinating to a man of highly cultivated mind, could be realised there. How then could the reproach, the affliction, the contempt, the persecution he chose to suffer for Jehovah, be "greater riches," appear more engaging and precious in his estimation, than Egypt's treasures? My simple answer is this: the reproach here mentioned is the stamp and seal which God puts upon his people, and with this impress he gives them the assurance that *they are his own people!* and God's afflicted and persecuted people know and feel, that with this title they possess a treasure of higher value than all the corn and all the gold and all the treasures and science of Egypt and the whole world. Such was the view of our Saviour himself, when he assures them, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." Such was the decided view of St. Peter, when he spoke to his brethren of "the trial of their faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, which though tried with fire, was to be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

My brethren, in seasons of sharp trial, endured for

Jesus and for the Gospel's sake, God is nearest to his people, and his word is felt to be most precious. This is great riches. In trying seasons we learn and see more clearly than before, the vanity and hollowness of the world, the unsubstantial transient nature of all earthly things; and the acquisition of this lesson is great gain. In trying seasons, the believer is growing most in spirituality; there is then unlocked to him in the word, a precious treasury. A verse, a passage comes home to his mind with glorious truth and adaptation; he can appropriate to himself a gracious promise; he is filled with spiritual joy. This is great riches! This was the view—the judgment which Moses had: and therefore his joining the fortunes of a persecuted and despised people, appeared to him greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.

III. We consider lastly *the great result which Moses expected* from his choice. He saw that present suffering would lead to future glory. This was Moses' hope, *he had respect unto the recompense of the reward:* and in the following verse it is said, "he endured as seeing Him who is invisible!" That he did not look for a reward in this world, is clear. Had he done so, he would have been sadly disappointed; for from the day he made his choice, his life was one of very great troubles. But he looked by faith beyond these terrestrial scenes: faith imparted to his desires and hope a right direction: he looked for his reward where Abraham did, in the city with solid foundations; and where Paul did, in "the house not made with hands,

eternal in the heavens." It was a long journey he had to accomplish, a dreary pilgrimage through desert scenes and stormy days, before he reached the city of rest, and the place of reward: but, though long and wearisome, his God helped him through: he did reach it at last. And when he stood on the top of mount Pisgah, when the Lord showed him the land promised to the fathers, at the end of his long pilgrimage, methinks He opened his inward eye, and he was permitted to see more than the earthly Canaan. He saw the original, the heavenly inheritance, the land of pure delight, where a great reward is reserved to the faithful pilgrim. But more than this, he was immediately permitted to lay aside his pilgrim garment, and forthwith to enter the promised place of rest; which was far better than crossing the Jordan, and entering on that which Israel was about to occupy.

My brethren, this glorious change took place probably upwards of eighty years after Moses had made his important decision: and amidst all the variety of trials and conflicts, he had kept on his course, with unshaken firmness and consistency. What was it that enabled him to keep up and persevere so faithful to the last?

My reply is: he was a man of faith, he lived near to his God, he felt he was under Jehovah's guidance, and he desired no other. His presence was what he desired and sought above all things—"If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." And then he was a man of much prayer. Whenever

any case of trial and emergency arose, he sought counsel from the Lord. Often do we read, "Moses enquired of the Lord," and sometimes, "Moses cried unto the Lord."

Such a consistent holy course gives a man a sure step, an iron firmness, a good conscience, a peaceful state of mind, and a clear prospect forwards to a happy end. The idea of a glorious immortality was not foreign to his mind. He knew that Jehovah was a God of the living, and not of the dead; and the last scene on Mount Pisgah bore witness, that his was a hope that maketh not ashamed.

My brethren, we count them happy which endure, and when we meditate on the interesting sketches of the saints in the Old Testament, described in this chapter, we come to the pleasing conclusion—"Surely these heroes in faith, conquering the world, have now obtained the prize for which they were contending in the day of their warfare." Now these things are written for our instruction, and their faith and holy lives are presented before us as patterns for our imitation.

I would then say again, *happy is the man* who makes this same choice with Moses. Let me advise you to consider and calculate as he did, what God will give, and what the world can give you. But you must address yourselves to the task not with a mind prejudiced and pre-occupied; for in that case Satan is sure to exercise his delusive power, to keep you in Egypt. Go to the work with the lamp of faith, with the word of God.

If you desire to receive the same clear, spiritual perception concerning truth and falsehood, Christ and Belial, the pleasures of sin and the reward of God's faithful people; you must decide in the first place upon one thing, and this is, to *be sincere and to be submissive.* Make this first resolution, "*I will seek* that portion which shall not be taken from me; that which God promises to his people;"—and secondly, "I will accept it from his hand under any circumstances. I will go where he bids me, I will do what he commands me, I will abstain from what he forbids me, and I will bear that portion of trials, which he lays upon me,—so that I may at last have the great gain of his true servants."

This was the disposition of Moses: in this disposition he made his choice. And I am persuaded that a sincere child-like disposition is the foundation upon which divine grace builds its superstructure; and a beautiful and perfect structure it will become; for grace brings every thing to perfection.

On the other hand, I would caution you; for there is a most solemn caution in this text to the waverer, to the man of doubtful religious views and principles, as well as to the man of the world.

God is very jealous of his honour: He says we cannot serve two masters Half and half measures, not too much of religion and not too deep in the world, will not do—it always ends in entire apostasy! Moses, with the deep piety and strength of mind and religious principles *he* possessed, might possibly have

maintained his character as a faithful worshipper of Jehovah for years to come, had he chosen to remain the son of Pharaoh's daughter; but the greater probability is, that in process of time his mind would have been immersed in the pleasures of Egypt. He saw this,—the degenerating tendency of union with Pharaoh's subjects; and broke off all connection with Pharaoh's house, and joined his own people! He had a great aim before him,—the noblest aim; and he succeeded. God's gracious intentions were carried out by his instrumentality.

Brethren, we are assembled in the house of God on the last Sabbath eve of a year which has nearly run its course. On the wings of time we are wafted onward to eternity.

Such a season is peculiarly suited for serious reflection. Have you made your choice? If you have not, if your immortal soul's concerns have been left out of consideration—let me ask you, what are you about? where are you going?

Think then seriously on the subject of death and eternity. The solemn scene will soon be ushered in. CHRIST says, "Behold, I come quickly!"—and when He has arrived—your destinies for eternity depend upon this one point,—whether or not you are ready? whether you have become as the Israelite, or remained an Egyptian, worshipping the idols of your own making?

Let parents remember the powerful influence their example and exhortations exercise upon the hearts

of their children. If mothers desire to meet with similar success to that of Moses' mother, they must first seek Israel's God and Israel's portion for themselves.

Ah, brethren, when we shall reach the point which Moses did at last,—when we shall look back from Pisgah's top on the scenes of life,—on the journey we have finished;—how shall we then view what many of us now prize so highly? How trifling will then appear to us those "*treasures of Egypt*" which now engage all the care and all the affections of many! Then it will be seen and felt, that to have chosen Moses' portion was the wisest choice, and that to have the certain prospect of a reward in heaven, is the most desirable and satisfactory possession.

God grant that this may then be our portion and inheritance.

PASSOVER AND PASSING THE RED SEA BY FAITH.

Heb. xi. 28, 29.

Through faith Moses kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned.

THE Apostle in the beginning of this chapter gives the following definition of faith:—it is *the substance*, or the ground, the confidence, *of things hoped for*, *the evidence of things not seen*. I am firmly persuaded that JESUS CHRIST is reigning in heaven, though I have never seen him with my own eyes:—this is faith. I feel assured that those who trust in Him will hereafter be received to the same happy place which he now occupies:—this also is faith.

The act of faith which Moses exercised in appointing and keeping the passover, had in a very high degree this character. He was to celebrate by a solemn festival the deliverance of Israel from Egypt's bondage, an event which was not yet accomplished. It stood only upon the strength of a Divine promise. But he felt fully persuaded, that what Jehovah had promised, would come to pass; though, at the time being, appearances were very unfavourable. King Pharaoh had shortly before decidedly refused to let Israel go. They seemed to be doomed to perpetual

servitude. The most dreadful visitations had not softened the king's heart. His confession after the hail-storm, "I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked," was a forced effort; something like a cry of despair in imminent danger. No sooner was this danger passed away, than he defied the servant of God afresh, and in wrath drove him away from his presence with the threatening words, "Take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die."

Yes! notwithstanding this critical, and in human eyes hopeless, state of things, Moses did celebrate a festival of joy in anticipation of the promised deliverance. Let me direct your devout attention to these two remarkable exercises of faith mentioned in my text.

I. The celebration of the Passover.

II. The Passage through the Red Sea.

I. "*By faith Moses kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood; lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.*" When the wrath of Egypt's proud monarch had been excited to the highest pitch, and the last spark of hope that he would consent to the departure of Israel had been extinguished; the hour was come when the cause of the Lord was to be brought to a glorious and triumphant issue:—"Thus saith the Lord, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that

sitteth upon his throne, even to the first-born of the maid servant that is behind the mill; and all the first-born of beasts. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, that ye may know how that the Lord does put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel." Such was the promise of God; and Moses and Aaron and those few Israelites who had the fear of God in their hearts, believed that what He had promised He was well able to accomplish; though mountains of difficulties stood in the way. They had already seen the hand of Jehovah displayed in the fearful plagues which preceded the one now about to be ushered in. And Moses, the man who first shrunk from the work he was sent to accomplish, waxed stronger in faith and bolder, as he experienced how the promised divine aid was sent in the hour of need.

Ah! brethren, faith is a remarkable thing. It increases in our hands, just as we make use of it. Let it at first be ever so weak, and small as a grain of mustard seed, if we go forward and venture something in reliance upon God, because he has commanded us so to do, or so to deny ourselves, or so to bear a cross; we feel that we are helped forward, we find that it is not so difficult as we at first imagined—just because we are not acting in our own strength, but in the sufficiency of God.

This is the method by which Jehovah led his servant Moses, and it is the same by which he leads on all his faithful children.

It was a solemn, a dreadful night, that last which the Israelites spent in Egypt. They were doubtless in anxious expectation, and fear was in conflict with hope:—"Will God truly accomplish this great work and deliver us from bondage, and revenge himself upon his enemies?" It was under these circumstances, in order to assure them of the certainty of the final success, that God instituted the celebration of the passover. Have you ever heard of a victory being celebrated before the battle was fought? That general would be considered rash and fool-hardy who should be found doing such an act,—feasting his friends and shouting victory, while the hostile army in overwhelming odds, was drawn up in battle array in his sight. But who can imitate Jehovah in his doings? It was at his command that Israel was to celebrate the festival, and none ever was celebrated since under similar circumstances, until that memorable evening when the Son of God sat down with his disciples to the last supper, previous to his death on Calvary.—The ordinance for the passover was this. Every head of a family had to take a lamb without blemish: it was to be roasted with fire and to be eaten that night. The blood of it was to be sprinkled on the side posts of the house in which the family was assembled; as a mark that Israelites were residing within; for the blood was to be a token; "and when I see the blood," said the Lord, "I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt."

Observe likewise the position and attitude in which they were to eat the passover. When a feast is over, people generally go to rest and lie down to sleep; but the Israelite was to be ready for his journey—ready to bid the last farewell to Egypt! "Thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste." And while the passover was thus kept within doors, at midnight the destroying angel passed through the land; "and the Lord smote all the first-born of Egypt; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead." Thus the Lord did put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. There was safety and preservation in the solemn assemblies of God's chosen people, while death and destruction raged throughout the land; and while Israel sung a song of praise in token of the hour of deliverance now come, the angel of death had his terrible feast of revenge upon the oppressors and murderers of their children.

The Israelites were a debased and degenerated race. Their enslaved condition had made them so. Still, a remembrance of God, and of the promises given to their venerable ancestors, was doubtless kept up among them; and in their afflictions they cried to GOD, and not to the idols of Egypt.

We may easily imagine what a solemn and deep impression the scenes of this last night spent in Egypt must have made upon the people. They were fully aware that the passover was instituted by God

himself, and a feeling of deep reverence must have penetrated the assemblies of Israel. The thought above all others, a thought so cheerful and bright, was that of deliverance from bondage: and doubtless the chief object of the feast was to impress on them the greatness of the divine mercy in accomplishing the wonderful act: therefore the festival continued to be celebrated in succeeding ages, as a standing memorial of the great event. But though the Israelite saw no further than the historical fact, I believe Moses was permitted to see the typical character of the institution: for he was a prophet, and the Lord spoke with him face to face. He probably beheld in the spotless paschal lamb, the thing foreshadowed thereby, even the Lamb of God, which was to take away the sins of the world.

And when the faithful Israelite in after ages, in searching the records of prophecy,—which in every succeeding century shed a brighter light upon the typical institutions of the Mosaic ceremonies,—was led to understand the deeper prophetic import of this type, and to look forward to the advent of a spiritual Deliverer; how must his heart have been enlarged, how must his ardent hopes have been drawn out, for the fulfilment of the thing foreshown!

What a deep significance might such a believer see, in the sprinkling of *blood* on the door-posts, which secured the preservation of the inmates of the house; and in so many similar bloody sacrifices—giving the offerers clearly to understand that "with-

out shedding of blood there was no remission of sin." Every Israelite who remembered the memorable night could look upon himself as a monument of God's mercy, *preserved and ransomed by blood from servitude and destruction! for the blood of the lamb was the signal of his safety.*

And who does not recognise the divine wisdom and goodness in these ordinances! They were intended for this very purpose; to lead the mind, and to draw out the desires, of the Israelite, towards a spiritual redemption,—towards the promised Seed of the woman, the great Prophet and Saviour of his people. In this prospect he had wherewith to comfort himself in his dying moments.

Abraham saw Christ's day from a distance and rejoiced. Jacob saw it, when he said, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." Moses saw Him, who was then still invisible; aye, and he spent with Him forty days on the mountain.

Now, my brethren, we have, with our New Testament open before us, a clearer and a fuller sight of the things typified, than the most enlightened Israelite had. The believer in the new covenant can truly say with the Apostle,—"We all with open face behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord." We see in the paschal lamb, the humble and lowly Jesus, who meekly bore the cross, and willingly laid down his life a ransom for the sins of his people. What kings and prophets desired to see, and longed to enjoy, but did not see, is now presented before us as a glorious fact

accomplished. We are, therefore, in a religious point of view, far better off than our fathers in the faith were, three thousand years since. Their's was a gloomy path; only here and there enlightened by a bright star of hope, just enough to assure them that all God was doing with and for them, would end well! Oh, brethren, we walk in the mid-day brightness of the gospel's light. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the centre point of the history of the world. The whole main scope of the Old Testament was to point and direct God's people towards it, and to prepare them for it. And the whole history of the world since the day of Pentecost,—even profane history, if you study its progress from a religious point of view,—shows you a great divine plan to prepare the world for the kingdom of Christ, to bring men to believe in Him, to worship Him, and to glorify Him.

What is the gracious arrangement of the ministry of the gospel, this mighty instrumentality now diffusing its energies in scores of tongues through every nation and clime? It is to proclaim the fact foreshadowed and prophetically exhibited on that memorable night by the paschal lamb;—the message, that the Son of God shed his blood and expired for the sins of the world! that man, the unhappy slave of a worse tyrant than Pharaoh, has by that judicial and meritorious act been delivered from sin's power and guilt, from Satan's bondage and eternal death.

Oh, that all would read that wonderful book of God. Fifteen hundred years elapsed while it was being

written. Patriarchs delivered to their descendants materials for it: prophets and apostles wrote it at divers times and places: and yet the inspired volume forms one perfect harmonious whole. Jehovah Jesus Christ is the glorious personage, the bright and morning-star, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end of it all.

Ah, brethren, do you know, that as in Egypt on the night of the Passover, so now, physical and spiritual death are raging in the world. What a world! what a scene of suffering and sadness! It makes one weary: it makes the renewed soul long to be out of it, and placed in a better:—"We, that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened!" Sin has wasted and ruined our best part: the very heart's blood is defiled. In this land of our bondage should we not, like Israel, cry to God? When death is destroying without, and the fruit of sin showing itself in every human frame gradually wasting away, should we not look about us, and be careful to obtain the great infallible antidote, to get spiritual life and health restored, the heart sprinkled and purified; and act upon the conviction, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin?

The result showed that the Israelites acted rightly in obeying the divine command; though they did not fully understand wherefore they kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood. When in departing they saw the heaps of the slain, and heard the cries of the afflicted Egyptians, they had the clearest

proof before them that the remedy provided for their safety had really been effective.

II. We consider *the passage through the Red sea!* "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land; which the Egyptians assaying to do, were destroyed." If ever a firm and lively faith was required, it was on that occasion. A dreadful desert, with a defile of black, rocky mountains on either side to pass through, a powerful well organised hostile army behind, burning with revengeful feelings, and the Red Sea in front! Pharaoh was sure of his prey; for as soon as he heard of their position, he said "They are entangled in the land; the wilderness hath shut them in." Moses, who from the first did not fear the wrath of the king, said to the people "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show you to-day."

But while he thus boldly addressed the people, a great conflict of faith was going on in his heart, and silently he cried to the Lord; and the cry of his faith found a hearing ear with God. Divinely directed, he lifted up his rod, and stretched out his hand over the sea! And an event happened which made all the nations around to tremble and be astonished. The waters of the Red Sea were divided; and the sea became dry land. The Israelites passed over it; and by day-break the six hundred thousand men, besides children and a mixde multitude (Ex. xii. 37, 38), were safely landed on the opposite shore. The passage was accomplished by night: the pillar of the cloud with a bright fiery effulgence gave them sufficient light, and

at the same time it served as a rereguard against the host of the Egyptians, who pressed closely behind, and who, though the pillar frowned darkly upon them, daringly went on. It is very probable that the Egyptians were not aware under these circumstances that they had actually entered upon the path which was sea before, and really considered it part of the land. Be that as it may, they went in and were swallowed up. It is stated that "in the morning-watch, the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire, and they were troubled." One glance from the eyes of Omniscience is sufficient to confound and bring down the mightiest foe! Thus the oppressor was overthrown; and his host sank like lead in the waters. The last retribution thus overtook them for the children that had perished in the Nile. And that path which God opened for deliverance to the faithful, ended in the ruin of those who had no faith, and consigned them to destruction. When Israel saw the dead bodies washed on shore, those who had a spiritual view of God's ways and judgments might have said with the Apostle, "Be not deceived: God is not mocked."

Does not the first interview of Moses with Pharaoh, and the king's subsequent conduct, remind one of the senseless pride of the daring infidel of the nineteenth century; "Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice and let Israel go?" In this haughty defiance of Jehovah he persisted to the last; but what was the end of it? He was engulphed in the overwhelming

flood; a warning type of the deeper and more fearful gulf into which his soul sunk down in hopeless irretrievable ruin. Oh, brethren, how many a proud and godless man has thus sunk into the pit! Pharaoh had learned no lesson by all the former displays of Jehovah's power. At last the instrument of safety prepared for God's suffering people became a grave to him and his thousands of hardened despisers of God. My brethren, our belief in divine Providence should be made a practical principle, if we desire it to be beneficial. The same Jehovah who opened a path through the sea is still ruling the universe, commanding the waves and hushing the storm. He still shows his hand in national mercies and national visitations;—in family trials and deliverances. Beware of Pharoah's pride and hardness: he had his time to humble himself; to come to the consciousness that there was a greater one than himself ruling over him—on whom the prince and the beggar are dependant—but he utterly disdained to own Him. Let none say, "I am not like him." He certainly was a giant in unbelief, but the evil quality of unbelief is within us all; and if not fought with and overcome, it will be strengthened by time, and lead infallibly to the same end. The people of Israel by these two great events, the passover and the passage through the Red Sea, were consecrated by God as his own. They were a purchased, a redeemed people: they might truly say, "The Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad." But these very great privileges were acquired in the way of deep trial. And

in the same manner God is leading his true Israelites still. It is frequently a path through deep waters! But this is exactly the best occasion for the exercise and increase of faith. Are you an Israelite? has He led you through similar seasons? then keep in lively remembrance the divine object He has in view. The Israelites murmured and wished to return to Egypt. As soon as they saw danger and troubles in their way, they said, "Wherefore hast thou thus dealt with us!" And because they murmured and shewed repeatedly this perverse and cross-grained disposition, all mercies and trials were thrown away upon them, and their carcases fell in the wilderness. When things go adverse and hard with us, let us not murmur nor look back to Egypt, but, like Moses, cry to the Lord. There is a precious promise to God's tried and faithful people;—"O Israel, fear not! for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name: thou art mine; when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." This promise is only realised in the exercise of faith.

In 1 Cor. x. 1, the Apostle states,—"All our fathers were under the cloud and passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." The cloudy pillar and the passage through the Red Sea are therefore types of baptism. By the two events we have been consider-

ing, the Israelites were consecrated to the Lord as his own adopted people—"Israel is my first-born son." Thus in the baptismal water, believers are consecrated to Christ—adopted into the blessed family of the redeemed. I look upon baptism as a blessing unspeakably great. Even though our little ones cannot enter with consciousness into the spiritual part of the ordinance, they are thereby brought into a covenant with Christ: baptism is a seal of their adoption into this covenant. It entitles them to a more precious possession than earthly parent ever bestowed on his first-born. But remember, brethren, *faith* in Christ is the main condition upon which the inheritance of the promised possession depends. As their being bedewed by the cloud, and their miraculous passage through the sea, profited the Israelites nothing, because the mercies vouchsafed touched not their hearts; so baptism and Christ himself will not profit —will not save that person, who goes to the world; and devotes not that heart and life to Him, which He has redeemed.

Let me then conclude my discourse with the effectual and solemn caution, "Have faith in God." Pray with the disciples—"Lord, increase our faith." Be not contented to be called an Israelite; but strive to be one of the spiritual seed of faithful Abraham. Many people deceive themselves with counterfeits, with a kind of imaginary faith, which possesses neither life nor energy, and never produces any fruits. The real faith which has life and worketh by love is

ever accompanied by humble repentance; and it is increased by a steady holy intercourse with God.

And what such a faith can effect, we see from this blessed chapter, in the example of those who have gone before us. How should it incite and stir us up to follow them, who through faith and patience have inherited the promises!

Forty years after the passage of the Red Sea, followed the passage of Jordan; the type of our last passage from time to eternity. That river we shall all have to cross. We shall find it less deep or shallow according to our faith. Then we shall reach the gates of the new Jerusalem; and there we shall hear the song of Moses and of the Lamb. May we all be found prepared and counted worthy to join in the chorus of the redeemed!

WHO IS A GOD LIKE UNTO THEE?

Micah vii. 18—20.

Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again: he will have compassion upon us: he will subdue our iniquities: and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.

THIS language was uttered by a man who had closely considered the ways of God with his people. The prophet appeared astonished at the long-suffering and compassion of Jehovah towards a people who were little deserving of such favours. And such a humbled, subdued state of mind becomes every true Israelite, when he remembers the gracious dealings of God with himself and his brethren. The Jews were a stiff-necked and ungrateful nation. Their history, in almost every page, shows one provocation—one act of gross rebellion and forgetfulness of God—after another. The general reader of their history receives the impression, that the object which God had in view with them, was not answered; and that all the privileges and mercies, which they shared so abundantly, were thrown away upon them. The divine object evidently was, that they should become the standard-

bearers of God's truth, and spiritual worshippers in the eyes of heathen nations. In fact their great commission was, to be the Missionaries of the Old Testament, conveying divine truth to the surrounding nations, and thus to prepare the world for the advent of the promised Messiah. But instead of being patterns of a pious, religious, God-fearing nation; they frequently sank down to a level with their heathen neighbours; adopting their idolatrous worship, and with it the low degrading vices which attended it; and it required repeated and severe chastisements to cure them of their infatuation, and bring them as a nation to confess their sins, and return to God in repentance and humility.

Though, however, a superficial view may leave no other impression than this concerning the Jews, we should after all be mistaken in thinking that the gracious designs of God were not realised in his ancient people. They did in a measure fulfil their mission. What would have become of the ancient world in the ages of the Babylonian, Persian and succeeding empires, if the light of divine revelation had not been shining from Zion, if the worship of the true God had not been preserved among that remarkable nation? They would all have been involved in impenetrable darkness. There would have been no rallying point to those who were longing to find the true light. Heathenism would have wrought out the eventual destruction of its wretched votaries. Whereas by the direct and indirect influence of the pious Israelites, a

Nebuchadnezzar, a Cyrus, and an Alexander at Jerusalem, with thousands of their subjects, became acquainted with the worship of the true God: and thus a hopeful star, foretelling the coming of better days, was shining from Zion in those dark and dreary times of ancient paganism. And doubtless in all ages God reserved to himself a seed of faithful ones—his seven thousand in Israel,—who did not bow their knees to the image of Baal, but honoured Jehovah by keeping His laws.

The following are the two leading ideas in my text.

I. THE PARDONING MERCY OF GOD.

II. THE SANCTIFYING MERCY OF GOD.

I. *The pardoning mercy of God.* Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by transgression! Thus exclaimed the prophet, in wonder and surprise; probably at the instant while he was reviewing some signal mercies vouchsafed to the Church in his days. He lived in eventful times: he witnessed the reign of one of the most ungodly and wicked kings. Ahaz was more of a heathen than an Israelite. It is said in the sacred record, "he did not do that which was right in the sight of the Lord his God;" he made his sons pass through the fire according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel. And in time of great national danger, when the armies of the king of Syria had invaded the land, instead of being humbled by the chastisement, and confessing his sins before God; he joined in league with the Assyrian

monarch Tiglath Pileser, to whom he became tributary. This ungodly king Ahaz was succeeded by Hezekiah. He was a good man, and it is said concerning him, "He trusted in the Lord God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him, for he clave to the Lord, and departed not from following him." Now in the reign of these two kings, Ahaz and Hezekiah, the hand of God in punishing men for their iniquities, and in pardoning, delivering and prospering them, after a general national repentance, was seen clearly manifested by a man of God like Micah. He witnessed the spiritual decay and relapse of the people; for when a prince and his court become immoral and profligate, the subjects are sure to catch the infection. The prophet witnessed how the righteous retribution of God followed upon this decay in religion, and hosts of hostile armies plundered and ravaged the land. He witnessed how Jerusalem was besieged; how Rabshakeh, king Sennacherib's general, blasphemed the living God, saying, "Your God is not able to deliver you out of the hand of the king of Assyria." He witnessed how Hezekiah and the remnant of the people humbled themselves; how the king with his court went up into the temple, spread the writing of Rabshakeh, full of bold defiance and blasphemies, before the Lord, and implored his help and interference at this time of emergency; and then how God's arm was stretched out, and the very following night the angel of death went through the camp of the Assy-

rians, and slew them, so that one hundred and eighty-five thousand were found dead corpses on the following morning. This signal deliverance doubtless made a deep impression upon the whole nation, and many who remembered the dark and dreary days of general forgetfulness of God, and base idolatry; must have felt that this was a great as well as an undeserved mercy; that in this national salvation God spoke to their hearts;—and their grateful feeling was uttered in these words, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage!"

Again, when the pious Israelites made a comparison between Jehovah and the gods of the heathen, they would arrive at the same conclusion: "Who is a God like unto thee!" They had seen those false gods: many had even served them, and had suffered bitterly for their idolatrous propensity:—they must have been able therefore to form a just estimate as to the results of serving the gods of their heathen neighbours and serving Jehovah: they must have seen in their own case, to what wretchedness and misery a nation is reduced, when bowing down to carved images; how the mind gets debased and stupified; how the morals are destroyed; what a shocking degrading influence is produced; and what vices are propagated by the very sight of the idol and the stories connected with it.

When under pious king Hezekiah, their hearts had been inclined again towards Jehovah, they must indeed have felt the powerful emotions of gratitude and

self-abasement which the text implies:—"Who is a God like unto thee!"—Baal or Dagon or Moloch or Remphan—those dreadful deities which delighted in human blood, and were to be propitiated by impure and unnatural ceremonies? What must have been the feeling of the sensible Israelite, whose heart was touched by grace, and whose eye was open to behold the beauty and deep significance of the true worship, when he adored in the Temple of the Lord? Even this—"Who is like unto thee, O Lord!—a holy God—but gracious and full of compassion withal; not destroying life, but saving life; and shining with the light of his countenance upon those who under a sense of their guilt cry for mercy."

And may not Christians as heartily enter into the spirit of the prophet's exclamation, when we come to the house of God, to hear His words of eternal life; and when we present before him our prayers and praises? If there is any feeling which should be uppermost in our hearts when standing in the presence of the Almighty, it is that of deep gratitude, that such a God is our God; one who has so highly distinguished us in manifesting himself to us as a gracious Father.

What a distinguished position do we occupy by virtue of a pure and holy religion, compared with that of our fellow-beings around us!* The Gospel of Jesus Christ has made us what we are, and placed us in this eminent position. And it is a false religion, it

* The idolaters and Mahomedans of Bengal, 1851.

is the worship of those who are no gods, which has lowered the Hindus as a nation, in the political, social and moral scale. When we think of the horrid objects of their worship, Kalee, Shib, Durga and Krishna,—when we take a glance at the absurd and immoral legends and stories connected with their history of those deities,—when we consider the revolting, heartless and soul-withering ceremonies which the idolater regards as divine worship,—when we reflect that in these absurdities there is nothing, absolutely nothing, to improve the mind, nothing to soothe and comfort the heart, no remedy to pardon and subdue sin, nothing to convey even a ray of hope pointing to a better future state, amidst life's dreary paths!—Ah! brethren, when we think of all this, then we must feel more than ever the greatness of our Christian privileges, and with joyful hearts we can say, "Who is a God like unto thee!"

But I feel persuaded this exclamation was uttered from a personal experience of the pardoning mercy of God. And truly this should become a personal concern with every child of man. We may rest assured, there is nothing in which each of us is more deeply concerned, than the fact here brought before us, that we may acquaint ourselves with a sin-pardoning God. We cannot think of God with any comfort divested of this most gracious attribute. In an unpardoned state there is terror without it;—God is like a consuming fire.

I do not know, brethren, how some of you may

feel at the remembrance of the glorious Being by whose favour we exist; but if a man is in any measure enlightened, if the voice of truth has not been smothered within, by a long continued, wilful resistance to it; the very thought of God is followed by a second thought;—"I am a sinful being!" This was the thought that occupied the prophet's mind. It was the thought of Isaiah, when he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne,—"Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips." (Is. vi. 5.)

If a biographical sketch were drawn up of any of us; I mean, not merely a record of the proceedings and doings of every day, as they fall under the observation of others, but a complete history—a sketch of the inward man—the desires, lusts, feelings of pride, hatred, revenge, and secret sins; probably it would not look much better than the historical sketches, recorded in the Bible, of God's ancient people. Ah! the picture would be quite as gloomy and dark. And what convictions should it produce? This—that we want "a pardoning God." Here alone is hope of safety. Our sins indeed resemble the overwhelming hosts of the Assyrians that spoiled the sacred land: they threaten to destroy us. What a conflict they cause! how deeply we are reminded of our utter weakness—our utter inability to get rid of the all-prevailing foe! It is this inward conflict with a deadly adversary which renders human life so trying, so wearisome, and all our best doings so unsatisfactory.

Do you find it so? And have you sometimes been led to the enquiry, what will be the issue and end of all this? Depend upon it you will come to no satisfactory conclusion, unless you do as king Hezekiah did with the Assyrian letter. Go to the sanctuary, to your private chamber. Spread the dark picture of past sins out before the Lord and cry for deliverance from your spiritual enemies. Then the great Conqueror of sin will appear to your rescue. As Israel's Saviour slew Israel's enemies in one night, so He will be your Saviour—"For the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sin."

I would particularly direct your attention to what the prophet has added; "*He passeth by the transgressions of his people; and he retaineth not his anger for ever;*" which signifies, that he remembers their sins no more. The pages which contained the list of them are passed over; yea more,—they are torn out of the book. God performs his sovereign act of grace to perfection. There might be pardon with a frowning face. In human transactions, when an insult has been offered, and the offending person makes a suitable apology, the matter is amicably settled, but how frequently is an unpleasant, an angry feeling kept up, an estrangement of mind, which at the first occasion occurring will lead to a fresh outburst of inflamed passions! Now our heavenly Father does not deal thus with his penitent and contrite children. The soul which he pardons is justified from all things: he who believes in God's Son, becomes an object of his tender

love and compassion. The light of His countenance shines upon him; and he then entertains the certain assurance, "My God loves me." This becomes a cause of joy and peace. When this new creation is effected inwardly, then a sense of this divine favour and love, brings the believer into that frame of mind, in which he can admire and rejoice in the dealings of his God; —"Who is a God like unto thee that pardoneth iniquity?" And this tender, contrite, subdued feeling, joined with happy surprise at the unexpected, gracious dealing of such a Being with sinful man, will not fade away like a morning cloud; it will not be momentary: no, it will become more rooted and deepened as the Christian grows in divine knowledge and conformity to the will of God.

II. We consider the *sanctifying mercy of God.* On this point the prophet utters these words: "*He will turn again: He will have compassion upon us: he will subdue our iniquities.*" After the ground-work to a sinner's restoration has been laid in his pardon; the infinite compassion of God is shewn by a further and progressive influence and operation upon his soul: and this beneficial influence and help is bestowed day by day, as he stands in need of it in his onward progress. What would become of us, brethren, in a world like this, if we had not this spiritual support, this unseen but real influence, to direct, to comfort, to strengthen, to arm us in the conflict, to enlighten our path and cheer us on to persevering efforts even to the end?

Our God wants not only a pardoned but a holy people. There is doubtless joy in heaven over the repentance of a sinner; but from the day he has been turned to God, he sets his face like the pilgrim fathers towards a better country, even a heavenly. It would be a great mistake then to think that when a person has tasted God's forgiving grace, sin is conquered and a smooth path opened to him leading straight to heaven. It is in fact the beginning of a conflict. But he need not be discouraged at this. Whereas formerly in his unenlightened state he either did not fight at all against sin, allowing the enemy to keep undisturbed possession of his heart, or if he attempted to subdue the evils he discovered, it was done with the self-made weapons of unassisted reason; he now has a friend, a leader, who puts trusty and well-tempered weapons into his hand, the sword of the Spirit and the shield of faith. And he finds that with these he can encounter his adversaries successfully. And more than this, he finds by happy experience that he is not *alone*. In those very moments when he feels himself most feeble, destitute and helpless, he cries to his Lord; and he finds that He is in very deed present with him. Now this is promised in the little sentence—"He WILL SUBDUE OUR INIQUITIES." A Christian's most effective weapons to resist and overcome sin, are faith and prayer. A firm, child-like persuasion, "Jesus will undertake for me;" and a confident application for this succour whenever help is needed; this is the real secret of success in the spiritual

warfare. God taught his people to adopt this plan in ancient times. When Israel was standing in fear and trembling on the shore of the Red Sea, the host of the Egyptians closely pursuing them; the Lord said to Moses, "Wherefore criest thou unto me?"—which clearly shows that he was by earnest prayer seeking help from God:—and then the people were told, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord; which he will show to you to-day." During the conquest of Canaan, God gave repeated proof to his people, that they did not get the land in possession by their own sword and valour, but that it was his mighty arm which accomplished that conquest. They had only to follow his directions, and to divide the spoil! How clearly is it shown by our Lord and his Apostles, that he pursues the same gracious plan with his followers now. They have indeed to buckle on the sword for the conflict daily. But he tells them, "Though in the world ye shall have tribulation, be of good cheer, *I have overcome the world.*" "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" is the exhortation: but the sweet assurance immediately follows, "for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

So likewise in the arduous work of publishing salvation by Christ to the world; arduous in the Apostles' days, as it now is in heathen lands; carrying the warfare into the enemy's own territory, and exposing the little band of evangelists to all the fury and malice of Satan, and to all the enmity and hatred of a be-

nighted world; the Lord armed his first ambassadors for the conflict with supernatural powers; which astonished the most learned, and rendered harmless the revengeful arm of fiery persecution. He told them, "Take no thought, how or what ye shall speak, for it *shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.*" *It is then of vital importance that we take* a right view of our duties and of the manner in which they are to be performed.

When we read therefore such a comfortable promise as this; "*He shall subdue our iniquities;*" it is our duty to enquire, where are *my* enemies? and with what kinds of sin am I particularly beset? Without close search and careful reconnoitering, a general cannot ascertain what hostile forces he is likely to encounter; and without a perfect knowledge of the arms at his disposal, he cannot properly arrange his forces so as to ensure success. Now, God does promise His help, and if we seek and use that help, our success is certain. Remember, brethren, he has not much to fear from the temptations of the world, and from Satan's power, who keeps his own heart under proper guard, who makes no compact with the enemy, but is decided to maintain the conflict, and by the help of the Lord to conquer. Ah, brethren, it is a great work;—this spiritual conflict which is to be carried on within! Evils and corruptions, with which in the beginning of his conversion a believer is unacquainted, are disclosed to us by a growing acquaintance with ourselves; and by a clearer light reflected from the

word upon our hearts. Oh, how much is to be put down! how much selfishness and impurity to be washed off in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness! Only through a process of deep humiliation can sin be overcome and destroyed. Every sin cleaving to us, hidden as it may be, has to pass through a judgment, a deep painful process;—to be known as sin, hated as such, and cast off as a cursed thing. It was under such deeply excited feelings we hear the prophet uttering a hope of final victory,—"I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him; until he plead my cause and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness."

The Christian in his most trying hour has hope; and the success he meets with in gradually subduing his iniquities, is a sure warrant to him that he will come off victorious at last. What a difference do we find in Peter, the rash and self-relying disciple in the early days of his discipleship; and in Peter, the mild heavenly-minded aged Apostle, such as we see him in his epistles. Grace has a conquering power; and the more a believer asks for and receives of that heavenly gift, the more fully will the objects of a gracious Father be realised in him.

My brethren, the historical parts of the Old Testament do fully and wonderfully harmonise with the brighter manifestation of divine mercy in the New. They exhibit Jehovah in the perfection of holiness and goodness. They show in every page that he is

a sin-hating and sin-pardoning God; with a gracious design in view,—to save the sinner and prepare him for a more glorious existence. How beautifully has this design been developed in the advent and redemption accomplished by Christ! Let us faithfully avail ourselves of this help: let us learn to become intimately acquainted with him in this character of a sin-pardoning God. What can be more desirable for a fallen, guilty being, than to be pardoned? what can be more satisfactory to the troubled mind than to be at peace with God? and to be placed beyond the reach of condemnation? He cuts himself off from all hope of a better portion, a heavenly reward, who looks for justification, for holiness, for acceptance with God, on any other ground.

For centuries, God presented this unspeakable gift to his ancient people. He taught them by hard lessons and severe discipline to cease from idolatry, and to seek their national and individual happiness in submitting to his will, and following his directions. How well was it with them, how prosperous in every respect was their condition, while they feared Him and sought his blessing! But because they forsook him and rejected the Son of God, they were rejected: and they are cast off still. Their last sin was the worst. Their condemnation was sealed, because they hated the light which had come into the world. Oh, let us not become guilty of their sin. There is no hope and no recovery to that man, who rejects the atoning blood of Christ: but *he* lays the

foundation of present and never-ending peace and happiness, who *gives glory to Him*, and seeks pardon and sanctification in His name.

THE LORD'S COMING AND HIS REWARD.

Rev. xxii. 12, 13.

And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

A FEW months before our Saviour commenced his public ministry, a man appeared on the banks of the river Jordan, calling to the inhabitants of Judea—"Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He was divinely sent as the forerunner of the Messiah, to prepare the way of the Lord before Him, and to give warning to the Jews, that the long expected Saviour was at hand. "I baptize you," he said, "with water unto repentance; but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." While John was thus announcing the advent of the Saviour, and with it the ushering in of a new era, the most important period of the world's history; Jesus, the long-foretold, the long-desired and prayed for Messiah, the Saviour of the world, made his appearance among his own people. He came;—but not, as the Jews had expected, with the pomp and power of royalty to re-establish the ancient kingdom of Israel, and so to sit upon the throne of his father David. He came in great humility:—"He came unto his own and his own received him not." He chose to

be known as a carpenter's son,—as the son of Mary. He selected a small number of disciples from the humble ranks of fishermen and publicans. He was poor, and had not where to lay his head; but he preached the kingdom of God with a power that astonished his hearers, and he denounced vice and hypocrisy with unsparing severity. A few individuals only, who became intimately acquainted with his real character, discovered the striking marks of divinity; and to their joy became convinced that he was the Son of God; "We saw his glory," says John the Evangelist, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

When the Son of man had fulfilled his ministry and shed his blood on Calvary, and died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and when by his glorious resurrection on the third day the divine seal had been vouchsafed, ratifying the salvation of man; He returned to heaven in the presence of credible witnesses: and no sooner had he vanished out of their sight, than two heavenly beings stood before them, announcing to the astonished disciples, "This same Jesus who is taken from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

We celebrate this day the festival of the advent of our Saviour.* It is a happy season for the Christian to remember,—an event in which he is so deeply interested. His coming down from heaven for our salvation, ensures to all His true followers the possi-

* Preached on Advent Sunday, 1850.

bility, yea, the certainty of going to heaven when this life's short journey is ended. Let us be grateful that He accomplished the stupendous work for us. The first advent is past (near two thousand years): but the angelic announcement warrants us to look forward to his second advent—his coming in glory.

To this let me direct your devout attention this morning.

In my text our Lord himself announces,—

I. A DECIDED PROMISE REGARDING HIS SECOND COMING.

II. THAT IT WILL BE ACCOMPANIED WITH A REWARD.

III. THAT HE IS THE INFINITE AND ETERNAL ONE.

1. *A decided promise regarding the Lord's second coming:*—"Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me."—The second advent of our Saviour has been the great object of hope, and the watchword of the Church, these eighteen hundred years past. The primitive Christians remembered his promise; and it gave them much joy and encouragement in all their trials and persecutions. Ah! how many thousands of our brethren who have fought the good fight before us, expired under the sword, and in the flames, with the bright hope of Christ's coming to cheer them! That sweet promise was the lamp which lighted their dark and dreary path through the vale of death—to the Father's house; and the certain expectation of it made them happy amidst all their sufferings. It appears that the Thessalonians expected the event in their own

times; and therefore the Apostle rectified their views, informing them, that before it was ushered in, great trials should befal the Church, and Antichrist, the man of sin, should be revealed. 2 Thess. ii. 3.

The coming of the Lord is frequently mentioned. We meet with allusions to it in every part of the Scriptures; and it is natural and reasonable that it should have a prominent place in the divine revelation; for Christ's second advent is the great end of the whole divine economy here on earth. It will be the closing and winding up of the history of the world, and the commencement of a new system of things—the beginning of his glorious reign, and heaven's great festival day, when all the saints, redeemed by him and washed in the blood of the Lamb, shall take possession of their long promised inheritance.

But the coming of the Lord does not always signify his second appearance to reign and to be glorified with his saints. The destruction of Jerusalem and the termination of the Jewish polity after the death of Christ, are called in some places *the coming of Christ*. These great national judgments befalling the Church in Messiah's day, were pointed out by the prophet Malachi (Cap. iii. 2, 3.)—"But who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth;—for he is like a refiner's fire, and he is like fuller's soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."

This prophecy clearly alludes to a time of great sifting; a judgment in mercy for the spiritual welfare of God's people; and of destruction to unbelievers, who were to be cast off like dross by the process of refining.

Again;—when an individual receives his first serious impressions,—when divine grace is at work in the heart,—when the Spirit awakens the sleeping faculties, and His operations end in conversion,—that blessed event has frequently been compared with the coming of the Lord. Thus when Paul was converted on his way to Damascus, when Lydia's heart was opened that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul, when the trembling jailor enquired, "What must I do to be saved?" those momentous events were a coming of the Lord—a coming to bring the richest blessings of His salvation. Oh, that our glorified Lord may come and visit us thus this morning!

However, the coming of the Lord mentioned in the text is distinctly the great advent:—it cannot be mistaken for any thing else. It is the personal revelation of the Son of God from heaven: for, as the context shows, it is to take place when this old, sinful earth shall be dissolved in the fire, and the new heavens and the new earth shall be revealed as the dwelling of the righteous. It will take place in the view of all. The report of it will resound through the whole universe;—"Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him!" It will be *sudden*, at midnight, when the world shall be wrapt up in sleep,—when it has

been eating and drinking, and living in pleasure; and when scoffers shall have been deriding the very idea of such an event; saying "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation:" —a time therefore of prevailing infidelity, and dense spiritual darkness. As the sudden flash of lightning illumines the darkest night, and the thunder peal that follows, arouses men from their sleep; so, according to our Lord's own saying, will that unexpected and sudden advent overtake and rouse up a sinful world!

At his first advent, Christ brought peace on earth, salvation to a fallen world: at his second advent he will bring the glories of heaven to his redeemed people. At his first advent, some few shepherds who watched their flocks at night in the fields near Bethlehem, received a sight of the new born Saviour:—a stable was his earthly home and a manger his cradle! At his second advent, he will appear in a grandeur and majesty sublime beyond conception, surrounded by legions of angels. Only Scripture language can give a worthy description of the scene;—"Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." When he made his first public appearance among his people he declared concerning his own condition, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head;" and to his followers he plainly declared, that they

should not expect more in this world;—"It is enough that the disciple be as his master: if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: if any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." When the Son of man comes again,—oh, how changed will be the scene! Think, brethren, what will be the feeling of faithful believers then. Will the sight of *Him* whom their souls love cause fear? Oh no; it will fill their souls with a transport of delight. To see Jesus, that same heavenly Friend, to whom they were united by faith, perhaps years before; with whom it was their daily comfort to commune in private devotion; by whose unseen but real presence their souls were often refreshed; of whose love and mercy they had many a cheering token and many a sweet foretaste;—what do you think will be the feeling of such tried believers, who have come out of great tribulation, and washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, when they see and recognise at once as the source of all their blessings, the Author of their salvation! And then, to be owned by Him, to see his smile, to hear his welcome—"Well done thou faithful servant!" This will be the beginning of heaven's glory.

II. "*Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me.*" The future advent of Christ will be the time of *reward*. The Lord's faithful servant does not always get a visible reward here: and he does not expect it.

Every man engaged in any service looks for a suitable remuneration—an equivalent for giving his

time and talents and labour to his employer. Now, my brethren, a Christian by profession stands through grace somewhat on the same terms with his heavenly Master. "You are mine," says the Lord; "yea, the whole world is mine: the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." It is therefore an awful mistake when the infidel says, "What have we to do with Christ? we will not have this man to reign over us." It is worse than folly: it is base rebellion against God. Such a man is digging away the foundation under his feet! We are Christ's by creation and by redemption. He is that king described in the parable, who distributed talents among his servants; to one five, to another two, and to a third one talent;—in order that they should go and occupy with them. He is the householder who has hired labourers into his vineyard; promising a suitable reward to each when the evening comes. He is the bridegroom who invites his friends to the great marriage supper, and warns them to keep their lamps trimmed and to have oil ready in their vessels—a plentiful supply, to be in readiness against his return.

The Lord has a right to give these injunctions; for whatever a man has received from Him is a gift, a loan for which he is responsible to the Giver. And if he gives the promise, you may rely upon it, if you are faithful with your trust, a splendid reward will be your portion in the day of the great account,—a reward far surpassing your expectations. How can we do otherwise than acknowledge,—"Surely we have

to do with a most kind and gracious *Master!* He evidently intends nothing less than the happiness of his servants; and what he demands, and the conditions he has laid down, are most reasonable and just!"

Yes, my brethren, there is in the promised second advent of Christ, and in the promised reward, every thing that can raise our most ardent hopes and expectations. His call therefore and His promise deserve to be met by a corresponding desire—by a prompt and earnest resolve to make ourselves ready and to keep ourselves ready for Him.

Study your innermost feelings, and perhaps you will find, that your immortal part is longing for that very good, that heavenly reward, which Jesus holds out. You long to be rich and happy! This ardent desire, divine in its origin, has by the fall been misdirected into a wrong channel. God is Jehovah, the source of life and joy: let your desires be centred in Him, and you shall find what you seek fully realised. The whole creation groaneth under sin. Even the Apostle, a sanctified believer, said, "We that are in this tabernacle, do groan, being burdened." He longed for the moment when his mortal part should put on immortality, that is, for the coming of the Lord; and for the reward, the crown of life, the being with Jesus and being like Him. By the sanctifying process within, by living near God,—for his glory,—for eternity,—the soul is prepared for the great Advent and the great reward: and this preparation must be carried on now, during the twenty, forty, or sixty years of this mortal life.

Some theologians have said that looking for a reward is selfish, and that to the virtuous the consciousness of goodness is a sufficient reward. This is poor philosophy;—infidel pride in a garb of self-righteousness. The Bible teaches me to look for a reward in heaven;—certainly not the wages of a hireling, but the reward of grace and love. I love my Lord; I identify myself with his cause; I rejoice when he is honoured and loved; I desire a good name, but above all his approbation; I strive to follow his example—to be like him; and I long to be with him, to see his glory; to dwell with his own people in the holy city, the new Jerusalem, where God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying nor pain. Ah, brethren, what can be more natural and proper for the Christian, than to be with his Master, to dwell in his element, to look for his reward, the crown of life reserved in heaven for him!

This reward will be in exact proportion to the work a man has done,—"according as his work shall be." Read the end of Matthew xxv., which is the best comment on this declaration. "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me....Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." You see then, that your faith and attachment to Christ, your

love to the brethren, your sacrifices and self-denials for Christ's sake, your prayers and supplications, your efforts to improve and benefit others, to alleviate the sufferings and misery of your fellow-beings, all your labours of love, are like so much capital laid out at high interest. Ah! He will remember it! it is all noted in his book; as the widow's mite is remembered even now in the Gospel. A cup of cold water given in love, he assures us, will have its reward: every pice and rupee thus given will be remembered, and what is devoted to Missions, in order to communicate the bread of life to those who perish from lack of knowledge. Oh, let us labour to be rich in good works! they will tell in the great day of reckoning. How is that man to be pitied who remembers only himself, who has no heart to give, no heart to think of his privileges and obligations! There is no blessing—but rottenness—in his house and goods. James v. 1—3.

III. Christ *is the infinite and eternal One.* With a view to afford his people a clear proof that he has a decided right and prerogative to reward and to punish, he gives them a glimpse of his divine character: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."

A (Alpha) and Ω (Omega) are the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet; and here signify the great eternal God, the beginning and end of the creation. I am *Alpha,*—the author of thought, that mysterious and sublime faculty. I created man when first I breathed into him the breath of life. I uttered

the word "Let there be light; and there was light!" "In the beginning was the WORD,"—"all things were made by Him." The whole visible creation is a simple expression of his will, an idea realised from his omnipotent mind. He was sitting on the throne on the first dawn of creation, when the morning stars sung together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. —And "I am the LAST"—the endless Infinite! What a sublime thought! who can comprehend JEHOVAH! When the whole creation shall sink back into nothing; when all the endless systems of suns and planets shall cease to revolve in their appointed orbits;—shall have been burned in the fire or crumbled into dust, then Jehovah Jesus shall still be the same. For mark! it is Christ who is speaking here;—speaking with a dignity and majesty which should strike every mind with awe!

Should not the unbeliever then listen to these solemn accents from the throne? should he not consider them a warning to provide against the day of retribution, whilst the Christian can recognise in them the language of mercy? Ah! thou wayward wanderer from the path of life, canst thou hear this voice of thy God without fear? If He who has revealed himself in this Scripture is not God,—where is He then? where can He be found? Will you seek him in your own reason? as an infidel nation once deified that faculty. Or will you seek him in the pantheon of the Greeks and Romans? or will you, like the Hindus, deify every thing? for they worship at certain seasons

the very rice they eat! and thus in such pantheistic vagaries lose the reality and personality of the great "I AM;" the ALPHA and OMEGA! Ah! brethren, when we think of the errors, the wild absurdities, the nonsense and obscenities, into which heathen philosophers and theologians have run; then we feel, at least we should feel, grateful for this blessed Bible; which tells us of the advent of Christ, of his love, his divine mercy and glory! Now if you believe this testimony, why not give it a practical application? why not acknowledge Him, fall down and worship Him as Thomas did—"My Lord, and my God?" Surely our own interests are engaged in it, and should prompt us so to do. His glory is engaged in it. He expects to be honoured by his people.

"Behold, I come quickly!" This is a word in season for us all. Let us give a sober and thoughtful consideration to it at this return of Advent. There is much in this announcement to animate Christ's Church; and to fill the hearts of his followers with joy.

Have you seen much trouble, much disappointment in your day and life-time? Is the heart sometimes burdened with care? Do you feel a weariness of this world coming over you? and is a deep sigh in the hour of calm reflection heaving from the depth of the heart, to testify that your spirit longs for liberty—for rest, for freedom from sin—for a better state? Lift up your eyes, weary pilgrim! for your redemption is drawing nigh. Ah! it is a cheering word, "*Behold, I come quickly!*" Your toils and your crosses are

dealt out with a wise and gracious hand! Let them be the means of weaning you from the creature, and developing your desire for heaven. A little while;—and all will be changed from suffering to glory:—"A little while, and ye shall see me, and your heart shall rejoice."

And then, how sweetly harmonious is this subject with the celebration of the Lord's Supper, which we are favoured to commemorate once more this morning! Thereby we proclaim, as the Apostle says, the Lord's death until He come. We express, in receiving the visible emblems of his body and blood, our faith, our hope in Him. We eat the bread and drink from the cup, with grateful remembrance that in the fulness of time He came to suffer and die for our sins;—that by shedding his blood and expiring on the cross, he paid a full ransom for us;—that to his death we owe our life, our comfort, our hope of glory. And here at his table we remember, to our joy and comfort, that ere long the Lord will come again; and we shall sit, drinking of the fruit of the heavenly vine, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,—yea with the whole Church glorified—in the kingdom of heaven:

Oh glorious hour, oh blest abode!
I shall be near and like my God:
And flesh and sin no more control
The sacred pleasures of my soul.

BLIND BARTIMÆUS.

Mark x. 51, 52.

Jesus answered and said unto Bartimæus, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

JESUS the LORD, in his social character and manner, did in some instances, deviate from the customs and habits of civilised society. Higher than the highest, He made little or no difference between high and low. Rank, honour, wealth and intellectual eminence, had no glory in His eyes. Though He shone above all others in knowledge, and though he was the Son of the Highest, yet he shewed a singular preference for the humbler classes among his brethren. He encountered on this account the severe censure of the great. They sneeringly remarked; "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them."

There must have been some good reason for this singular predilection. According to the views of many, He acted an injudicious part. Some of our wise men would have told him, "If you wish to bring your religious principles among the people and to get followers, you should spread your influence among the better classes and not sit down with fishermen and publicans." But as the heaven is higher

than the earth, so were His ways higher than their ways; and so he acted quite contrary to the ideas of the wise and prudent. I believe one reason was, that it entered into the divine plan of his mission to be *poor;* that by his poverty, even in this sense, we might be rich. His life of poverty and self-denial was meritorious. If we like to be great and rich and to rise above others; it is food for our corrupt carnal desires. The Son of God suffered for this sinful propensity, that we might not be condemned. There is another reason why he chose to walk in the humble paths of life: *there* he found more sincerity and greater susceptibility, and less pride and unbelief than among the honoured classes.—Now it is true that poverty is frequently the companion of ignorance, and of vice too; and temporal distress and pinching want are in themselves very unfavourable to the growth of religion.—Frequently they harden and embitter and brutalise the mind. Still, in how many instances do we find that by poverty the heart is softened and rendered susceptible of better impressions; and a man who in better days would not be brought to think of religion—when his earthly stays and possessions are removed, begins to think soberly and calls upon his God.

In the story which I have selected for my text, we find our Saviour coming in contact with an individual in the lowest state of human existence. His compassion was drawn out; and the earnest prayer of poor blind Bartimæus was granted, in the restoration of

his sight. It was a splendid manifestation of the Saviour's divine glory. There is much in this story to lead us all to a serious reflection of our own condition, and to show us the need of prayer.

I. Let us in the first instance cast a glance at the *condition of the blind man.* Jesus was coming out of the town of Jericho. He was, as usual, accompanied and followed by a great number of people; and, unnoticed probably by most of them, there was a blind man sitting by the way side begging.

A person deprived of his eye-sight may truly be called one of the most unfortunate—most pitiable beings. To him the whole creation is a blank; he is confined in chains of darkness. That which renders life pleasant and joyous,—the beauties of the creation around us, the light of the sun, the verdant landscape, the variegated scenes of light and shade, the gently flowing river, the flowers of the field, the endless variety of forms presenting themselves to the eye wherever it turns—all furnishing a constant feast to the thinking mind, and supplying materials for reflection, cause for joy, and incitement to activity,—all these that poor fellow-creature is deprived of, to whom a mysterious providence has denied the sense of vision.

Bartimæus, however, was not only blind; he was wretchedly poor; a homeless beggar, sitting by the road-side, getting the scanty means of his subsistence by asking alms from those who passed by. Home, be it even a humble home, has its little comforts; and

there is a feeling of ease and sweet repose attached to it, which no other place can afford. This he had not; nobody cared for him; he was dragging on a miserable existence, without any hope of relief or amelioration. In gloomy darkness he had to make his way.

And do we not find in this unfortunate being a resemblance to one sad feature of man's condition since he fell from God, and forfeited the favour of communion with Him? Yes: we are informed in many passages of Holy Writ, that blindness has happened unto Israel, and to all the children of Adam. The natural man does not understand the things of God. It is true that wise men among heathen nations had some idea of a Divine Being. Socrates and Seneca had some remarkably correct notions of His attributes and moral government. But the little glimmering of light which a few great men of this kind received, only shews how dense was the darkness around them. A little child that has learned the Lord's prayer,—the simplest outlines of divine truth, has after all more correct knowledge of his heavenly Father than they had.

But we must not represent this state of spiritual blindness as one which is peculiar to heathenism. "The light"—the blessed light of the gospel—"shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." "Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Such was the case with the Jews when Jesus, the light of the world, was personally

among them. There is none so blind as he who *will* not see,—none in greater delusion than the conceited Pharisees, who put the question sneeringly,—"Are we blind also?" and to whom Christ gave the appropriate answer,—"If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." What do most people understand about religion, spirituality of mind, fellowship with God? Nothing—nothing at all: these are strange things to them. If they form any ideas about them, their ideas are either quite wrong or at least very defective. When no spiritual desire or perception has been developed in the mind, how can a spiritual feeling or judgment be expected? "The god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

And does not the natural, unconverted man resemble this blind man in his forlorn, homeless condition,—begging on the road-side? The heathen are thus cast out,—unhappy wanderers. Having strayed from the right way, they know not the God who made them; they know nothing of the heaven for which He destined man. "The fool says in his heart, There is no God:"—this is the sentiment current among the Socialists and democrats of Europe. They want to get rid of God, and religion, and Churches, as well as all government: and therefore their revolutions on the Continent have failed. Stumbling upon the Rock of ages, no wonder they have been crushed and broken!

Oh! what is man without faith in God? what is *sinful man without Christ? what is suffering man without a lively hope of heaven? he is a homeless,* godless stranger indeed, wandering about, going he knows not whither;—the prodigal who hired himself to keep swine—feeding upon husks!—Does not the question sometimes dart through his mind, "What am I doing here? what will be the end of all this?—this is not the thing; this is not my home." Yes, brethren, in the wildest delusion of sin, in the most irreligious mind —the thought, "I am wrong," occasionally disquiets and disturbs man's wildest worldly dreams and lying fancies.

And is not this the case with many, who have some degree of light, some knowledge of divine truth,—who have from childhood shared some of the privileges of connection with a Christian Church, yet manifest no real sense of higher duty, no care for the soul, no definite desire for its religious blessings? They are deep in their own schemes, they are busy in carrying out their own plans; but deaf and blind to higher things. They cannot therefore hear a Saviour's voice. His footsteps are unknown to them.

II. We consider, secondly, *the earnest cry of Bartimæus.* Jesus during the few years of his ministry visited many places. Thousands saw him and heard his voice; but few—ah! very few, were aware of his real character. So it is now. But with blind Bartimæus it was somewhat different. Though blind, he had ears open to hear. It is said that when people have been

deprived of sight, the other senses become more acute. *He listened, and heard that something remarkable was going on. He made enquiry, and was informed* that Jesus was passing by. Perhaps he had tried human remedies before, but without effect. He had doubtless heard of the fame of Jesus; and he reasoned with himself in this way; "If it is true that he has healed the sick and cleansed the leper—he may also be able to restore my eye-sight. I will try what importunity will do." He began to cry out and say, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." The remarkable part of this prayer is, that the suppliant appeared to know more about the real character and dignity of Christ than many wiser people did. He called him the Son of David, and knew that he was descended from that great king. In the book of Revelation our Lord calls himself, "The root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning-star."

Bartimæus appears to have by faith received a clear persuasion that he was Messiah, the great Deliverer; and therefore well able to grant him his petition. My brethren, a person in order to pray in a proper manner, and in an acceptable manner, requires the gift and exercise of faith—"I believe that Jesus is the Son of God,—that he is able and willing to help me."—"The preparation of the heart is of the Lord." Without the influence and assistance of the Holy Spirit, giving us a clear view of the person and character of Christ, we cannot pray:—at least, it is a formal business without life and

energy. Bartimæus had likewise a clear view of his own condition; and this enabled him to pray with humility,—"Jesus, have mercy upon me!" No Pharisee, no self-righteous man, ever prayed in this humble, contrite manner. It is impossible to one who has not had his inward, real condition laid open to him, to come down so low: nature struggles against it. A man's feeling of integrity and self-respect is incompatible with it. The very idea of kneeling down before God and opening the lips in humble confession of sin—how repulsive is it! how awkward a proud man feels in the very attempt to bend his knees!—And yet to come into this position, and cry for mercy at last, is the only way to a sinner's restoration. Nothing else will be of any avail. Self-righteous man, give glory to God! allow the Spirit of truth to shine into thy soul; and you will ere long perceive, that the cry for mercy to a gracious Saviour is the commencement of your deliverance, and brings light into your darkness. With the opening of the heart, and the first utterance of confession, a sweet ray of hope will rise in that mysterious abode within! It is the beginning of peace and life.

Bartimæus met with much discouragement. The people around him were displeased with his cries and prayers; and "charged him that he should hold his peace." Probably they gave him to understand, that it was of no use;—that so distinguished a personage could not trouble himself with so obscure an individual. But he was not put down so easily. Instead

of being silent, he got up and re-doubled his efforts, crying with greater earnestness. He reasoned in this way, "If I do not get relief from him now, and if I once allow him to pass by, it is all over with me."

Now in this incident a very striking feature in man's conversion is pointed out to us. When a person becomes in earnest and manifests a concern for his salvation, he must not expect that all will go on smoothly and plainly. No, he will meet with opposition and difficulties on every side. The world will be up, and annoy him. Satan will vex and tempt him. His mind will be filled with doubts and dismay; and sometimes he will be quite perplexed, and see no way to escape.

How far will heathen parents and relatives not go in deterring the serious thinking youth from praying to Jesus and embracing the Gospel! But I have heard of similar instances in Christendom. I have heard a father say, "My son has become mad;"—because he mourned over his sins. I have known of a young woman of noble family in Germany, when she became serious, being shut up by her parents; and afterwards sent by them into worldly society and to places of dissipation—and all in order to drive away her religious fancies;—and they succeeded. The tender plant of grace was choked by the thorns!

A consistent Christian, at the time when he takes the decided step from the world to Christ, will become a marked man. He must bear something: and the more prominent his position, the worse for him in a

temporal point of view. Paul became a noble witness for Jesus after his conversion at Damascus: and what said the Lord about him? "I will show him how great things he must *suffer* for my name's sake." This was one of the marks to show that he had been made a chosen vessel. The fact is, true piety and godliness are exceedingly distasteful to the world. True religion will never become a fashionable thing,—because the sign of the cross is upon it. The old man has too little share in it. See how they cry out against it,—how they depreciate practical religion! "Be quiet and don't talk to me about these things;—I do not wish to be disturbed; my mind is made up on the subject."

But blind Bartimæus would not be kept back, and he only cried the more a great deal. And he was quite right. Had he allowed himself to be intimidated, he might have remained blind all his life. The Lord honours a sincere disposition; and if by faith we break through all impediments to His feet, the result is sure acceptance by Him. Let us imitate the poor man in this. He was not content to pray to Jesus once; but he cried till he obtained a hearing. How often are we exhorted to earnest and incessant prayer! It is not because the Lord's ears are heavy that he does not hear at once; but it is to draw out faith and hope, and to make us more fully sensible of our wants and our dependence on Him to supply them.

III. *The compassion of Jesus*, "And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be brought." The mis-

sion of Christ was one of mercy and love. There is much to encourage us, when we study his character and disposition;—so truly adapted to our state and wants. His sympathies were drawn out in cases of human suffering and distress: and where he met with a soul made tender and susceptible by affliction; how kindly and readily did he apply his hand, for the alleviation and removal of temporal distress; and—what is of more importance—to convey the blessings of peace and joy to the bowed down heart. Jesus sent for the man whose imploring cry had excited his compassion.

This was good news to the poor man in his fear and distress. He knew from past experience, that often he had asked for alms in vain,—that kindness and sympathy are not to be met with every day. In order to arrive in the presence of the Lord the sooner, he cast away his upper garment; and hope quickened every step. The anticipation of relief in sorrow,—of better days to come, after months and years of affliction,—of health being restored, and so a paradise of happiness opened before the mental vision:—ah! how cheering is even the prospect of all this!

May not his earnestness, his haste to come to Jesus, supply the Christian with an example of prompt action?—"My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning."—We are too slow in the great work, too doubtful; reasoning, where we ought to act; and conferring with flesh and blood, when we ought to believe. If that blind man had said, "What is the use of my going? he may after

all do nothing for me:"—he would have precluded himself from the act of mercy by his unbelief. But off he went. And so must *we* bestir ourselves, nor mind our incumbrances, but cast off the upper garment. These incumbrances we shall always find; and the older a man gets, the more insuperable they are.

How kindly did Jesus address him!—*What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?* Did He not know why he came? was it necessary for Him to be informed about his peculiar affliction? Oh no! He knew it all. Then why did He ask him? It was to open the heart of the poor man; and it was to inspire him with faith and confidence. How much can be effected by a kind word, especially when it comes from a superior, a prince! And we must remember, that on such occasions, when Christ was going to perform a miracle, virtue went out from him; and with the word pronounced, this healing and comforting and saving power was conveyed to the sufferers. The question was therefore just calculated to put him into a proper state of preparedness for receiving his sight!

And does not the Lord sometimes ask us, with a similar end in view—What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?—to bring home to us the consciousness of our blindness, our poverty, our great need of Christ? How sad, that some will not answer,—remain silent,—cannot understand why such a question should be put to them by the Searcher of hearts! How awful the perverseness of those, who turn away in stubborn sullenness, seeming to say by their very surprise and

impatience,—"I want Thee not: I am not blind; I am not sick; I am no sinner; I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing!"

"Bartimæus replied, "*Lord, that I might receive my sight.*" What a simple thing is true prayer, the expression of our wishes in a reverential becoming manner! He desired a gift suited to the privation which had rendered him unhappy for so many years,—the gift of sight!—that he might be able to see the works of God's creation,—that he might be able to walk in the light of day, and no longer grope about in darkness;—that he might be able to do something useful for his own support and not be obliged to earn his morsel by begging.

His first prayer was not so definite. It merely appealed to the mercy of Christ: but now, in the presence of the Lord, his earnest desire was preferred in a more decided form. Thus God by his grace leads souls step by step nearer to himself,—to the light of truth. First he gives a sense of their misery, by making them aware of their spiritual diseases: then follows the earnest cry for mercy,—when he reveals Himself to the soul in his kindness and compassion. Then follows the prayer for spiritual eye-sight, "Oh send out thy light and thy truth: that they may lead me unto thy holy hill!"

From this simple prayer for sight we infer, that spiritual intercourse with God is not such a formal thing as some people fancy, who can never divest themselves of a book of prayer, when they go to their

devotion. When our spiritual desires are awakened, we become aware of what we need; and a sense of need is the best teacher of prayer. When the ship was ready to sink in the waves, then the cry was most earnest; "Lord, help us: we perish!—" I am full of trouble, my peace is fled, what must I do?—I go to my God and cry, "Lord, be thou my helper." I am hurt, annoyed, distressed:—I go and lay down my load before a throne of mercy. I feel cold, dead,—have no spiritual relish,—am like a dry stick; and the feeling makes me wretched:—what am I to do?—Go and read a novel?—or talk and laugh it away?—Ah! that does my soul no good. I want life, vigour, a draught from the fountain. I hear Jesus say,—"If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink!" I follow his direction; and my soul is refreshed and at rest. This is the practical part a child of God has to learn. He knows why he comes to God in prayer. He feels, "*There* is my proper place: *there* I find all my wants supplied." How many a pleasing proof has he received that there is a prayer-hearing God!

IV. The last part is *the gracious reply of the Lord: "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole."* This was indeed being dismissed by the Son of David in a royal manner—with a gracious, princely gift. Think of the joy and satisfaction it must have produced in the poor beggar's mind. As the words were uttered, the power of sight was restored to him. It was the work of a moment, and without the application of human remedies. No ointment,—no further

medical treatment was required,—no gradual cure,—but, with that word of command, the deadened nerves began to resume their operation in the most delicate and wonderful member of the human frame. The dark curtain was removed. Bartimæus saw the creation, perhaps for the first time, in all its beauty and variety, laid open before him. Who can understand and explain this act? It was through the same Almighty agency which in the morning of the creation said, "Let there be light: and there was light."

And very much like this act is the process of conversion to God; when grace, mercy and peace first shine into a sinner's heart; and the new creation is effected, where before all was confusion and gloomy darkness. How beautifully is it described by the Apostle: (2 Cor. iv. 6.) "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!" Such a time will be remembered for life. The happy recipient of it is too certain of the fact, to allow any captious disputer to reason the conviction out of his mind:—"This I know," he says, "that, whereas I was blind, now I see." He will tell others what God has done for his soul. He will pray that the heavenly light may spread far and wide and dispel all darkness brooding over heathen lands.

"Thou who didst come to bring
On thy protecting wing
Healing and sight,—

Health to the sick in mind,
Sight to the inward blind,—
Oh, now to all mankind,
Let there be light!"—

And he will from henceforth follow Christ, as Bartimæus did:—"He rose and followed him." It is a good thing to be near such a kind, compassionate friend. Oh it is a good thing to have this heavenly Physician near at hand. He who has enjoyed his gifts, his favours, will never wish to part with him; but will say with Peter—"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

My dear hearers, it is not possible for any one who has read the word of God with some degree of attention, and who has studied the human heart, to be unaware of the sad truth which this little history illustrates,—that man suffers under a want of spiritual perception, and is in fact blind regarding his eternal interests. The question therefore may well be put;—Has a sense of this condition prompted you to pray as Bartimæus did,—"Thou Son of David, have mercy upon me?" You likewise should know something of the unhappiness of being houseless and homeless, that is, a stranger to God and to the Father's house above! Do you not sometimes feel a longing towards that place? We all long to see our earthly home and fatherland again. Oh, let us cherish the spiritual feeling, and endeavour to secure a place above, while we have time and opportunity.

In the performance of our spiritual duties, many

of us have been hindered by the world, by our cares, our secular duties, our unbelief. Have these incumbrances ever prompted you to cry more earnestly for help and strength to God? to try and pray again till the victory was achieved? If so, all is well!

You have heard Jesus say to you,—"What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" What then is your prominent desire?—*Lord that I may receive my sight?* "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Ah! where are those that seek this above all, and send their best affections upon the wings of faith up to that place where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God?

You have heard that Christ can restore the human sight, and that he will accomplish the cure in all who believe:—"Thy faith hath made thee whole." There must be a laying hold of him—there must be a preparedness of the heart, an inward persuasion that he can and will have mercy, and save and restore our souls!

If He has performed the gracious operation, if we see Him by faith, if we love Him, oh let us show our gratitude and follow him in the way. Among ten lepers cured, only one returned to give thanks to God. And Jesus puts the solemn question,—"Where are the nine?" They were gone. They were satisfied with the removal of the bodily malady, and cared for no more. A grateful heart, a lively sense of His mercy, is the best proof that we have experienced the healing power of the heavenly Physician.

I HAVE CHOSEN YOU.

John xv. 16.

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you.

THIS gracious declaration of CHRIST contains a doctrine which has led many into a system of vain speculation; and because they lost sight of the practical bearing of it, learned divines have allowed themselves to be drawn into passionate disputes, which have ended in unhappy strife and unprofitable discussions. Thus a Scripture truth which has been given to GOD's people for their comfort and encouragement, became under the hands of prejudiced controversialists, a cause of offence.

Concerning this doctrine we are told in the Articles of our Church;—"The godly consideration of predestination, and our election by Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things. On the other hand, for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby

the devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchlessness of most unclean living."

When we meet with any difficult passage in Scripture, the safest way to obtain a clear understanding of it, is to read and read it again, and compare it with the preceding and following parts. In adopting this simple plan, it is surprising how readily obscurities pass away, and what appeared at first sight difficult to understand, becomes as clear and simple as one could wish. Thus it is in the present instance. We here find our Saviour engaged in a delightful conversation with his disciples. He assured them of his most tender friendship: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends." But to guard them against misunderstanding this assurance of delightful relationship with the Son of God, he gave them to understand that this friendship was not established upon the ground of equality, but was to be realised only, while they felt their dependance on him;—"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."

Let us, for our mutual encouragement, give our devout attention to this gracious declaration: We consider

I. THE ELECTION OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

II. THE OBJECT FOR WHICH HE HAS CHOSEN THEM.

III. ONE OF THE MAIN PRIVILEGES OF IT.

I. *The election of the disciples.* It was a free, spontaneous act of Jesus, independent of their own movements: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." That our Saviour regarded this act of choosing and selecting his disciples, as one of vital importance, is evident from the grave and devout manner in which he undertook it. We read in Luke vi. 12, that previously he spent a whole night in prayer to God. This election was of high importance, not merely as it concerned their own spiritual state; for the twelve were, after due preparation, to convey the Gospel of salvation to the world. The idea of being called to such an eminent station had never entered into their minds. Nor do we discover any trace of a resolution having been formed by any one of them to become a follower of the Lord, previous to his call. When Jesus met Peter, James and John; they were engaged in the humble calling of fishermen; and he called to them, "Follow me; and I will make of you fishers of men." They did so, without any preconcerted plan. It was upon the impulse of the moment. They felt powerfully drawn towards him; and it was probably some time after, that the conviction was matured in their minds, that he was the Son of God. —They were doubtless sincere, good, upright men; but they had little knowledge of the world: their stock of mental acquirements and information was very limited. As to education and learning, they possessed none. The council of Doctors at Jerusalem discovered at their first examination that they were "unlearned

men." Yet this uncultivated soil was selected by the Lord, to deposit there the pure seed of the Gospel. These simple men, of no learning, were selected to become the ground stock—the first element of his Church. How wonderful, how contrary to all human calculation and proceedings! If you had asked any sensible, enlightened man, in good society at Jerusalem, what class of people was likely to be most unfit for becoming the representatives of the Church of the new covenant, the messengers for the conversion of the world, he would have said ;—"Take a set of fishermen at the lake of Tiberias out of their boats, and you are sure to fail in the first attempt." He would have been for going to Dr. Gamaliel, and the first rabbis, and choosing from among their disciples, the most acute and most advanced in learning.

But "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation :" and it must be remembered, that a change of heart, of the affections, is the chief thing to entitle a man for becoming a member of it. The principal quality, therefore, whereby a man is fitted to advance it in others is the new *preparedness* of the heart; an experimental knowledge of God's saving grace; spiritual union with Him who is the Head and the Life of the Church. Our Saviour's teaching was altogether in that direction. He insisted on union with himself, as the root and mainspring of usefulness and happiness. And who would venture to deny that this choice of his disciples and the manner of his teaching them, was the best and most perfect; both

for the good of their own souls and the great work of the ministry.

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." How deeply must the disciples have felt the truth of it. How different were their views, how different their feelings at the time when their heavenly Master addressed these words to them, from what they had been at the time of their first calling. Then they did not know the real character of Christ: they had very imperfect crude notions of his kingdom: they did not know themselves. And how gently and kindly had he brought them on these three years past, developing in their minds right and correct ideas concerning their souls and their salvation.

They doubtless adored and wondered at the divine leadings with them; and their innermost soul responded to the address. What do you think would be the feeling produced in them on reflecting on the truth of this sentiment? Certainly one of deep humility and gratitude,—the feeling expressed by David,—"Who am I, and my house, that the Lord has brought me hitherto!"—"What is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?" Indeed, what is man, that the Lord of heaven should deign to choose him, and make a vessel of grace of one naturally so corrupt, so deeply fallen—a vessel of wrath!

My brethren, every regenerated sinner, born from above, and brought into communion with Jesus, is a monument of God's sovereign mercy. Let us give

the text this practical bearing; and I feel sure it will be a cause for humble gratitude and praise.

If any of us have been brought seriously to reflect on God and eternity; if any of us have been roused up from the sleep of spiritual death; it is by the operation of an Agent whom we did not know, who was sent from above in the day of our visitation; and who, almost imperceptibly to us, directed our minds to better things. If any of us have been led to mourn over our sins and to acknowledge and bewail them with contrition, and to seek the gift of pardon and justification in the name and by the merits of Christ; the words are applicable to us,—"I have chosen you;"—"By grace ye are saved;"—"It is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." If we have at any time felt strength and boldness freely to confess our Saviour before the world; and, when occasion required it, to speak a word for his honour; it was a gracious gift of his good Spirit.

If the soul is drawn out in a spirit of prayer, with an increasing desire to be more assimilated to the image of Christ, to become humble and meek and holy as he was in this world; if the ardent aspiration arises from the innermost soul for a fuller and more uninterrupted union with God, even as the branch is united with the vine; believe me, it is the work of Him who said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, the same bringeth forth much fruit."

Ah, brethren, what a happy thing to be enabled thus

to glorify God, if we are brought to see and feel, that our deliverance from sin, our restoration to communion with God, our sanctification and final redemption, are all, from first to last, by the free grace of God! Then we are in the right state: then He receives all the glory, and the creature is abased: then we love the Author of our salvation, and joyfully join in the chorus of the redeemed,—"Thou art worthy to receive praise, and power and glory!" The world taunts God's people with this term, "elect;"—as if they presumed to adopt a title to which they have no right. But so far from boasting in self-complacency of the exalted privilege, I believe nothing is more calculated to cast down selfishness and pride than the clear consciousness, "If I am a child of God, one thing I know,—that I have not become such by my own efforts, but by the renewing and sanctifying grace of Him, who says, 'Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.'"

At the same time, I would guard you against the unscriptural and unreasonable deduction, which people feel inclined to make from this doctrine; saying—"If some persons are chosen of God, and others are not; what is the use of my endeavours to become good and religious? If I am to be saved, I shall be saved without my efforts; and if I am to perish, I cannot prevent it." To these we would reply, "Your argument is not derived either from Scripture or any true source of light, but from a mind perverted by ignorance and unbelief."

We nowhere find that God has appointed a people or a single individual by a sovereign decree for eternal ruin and damnation; but we have the clearest declarations that God willeth not the sinner's death. We nowhere read in the Bible, that any one who made an effort towards returning to God was disappointed. On the contrary, we have the decided assurance,—"Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out!" So you see, brethren, there is no shadow of excuse for those persons who can be unreasonable enough, to ascribe the cause of their impiety or want of religious dispositions to their not being elected.

People of this description must be told, that before they give a graver consideration to a subject so solemn and momentous, they cannot expect to derive much benefit from reading their Bibles or hearing the word of God; and that in order to hear and read effectually and profitably, a feeling of devout respect, and a consciousness that Almighty God is in his word speaking to his creatures, are indispensable.

II. We consider *the object for which Christ had chosen his disciples.* "I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit." Jesus said in a preceding verse; "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." You see then, brethren, our election, as shown in the case of the Apostles, has two objects in view. The *first* is, that we should become partakers of Christ and his salvation. The *second* is, that we should do a certain work for him,—"The kingdom of heaven is

like unto a certain householder who sent out his servants to hire labourers into his vineyard." True religion does not invite us to a life of indulgence and idleness, but it prompts to a life of activity and painstaking diligence: it sets every faculty of mind and every affection of the heart in motion. Look at the example of Christ,—how he laboured, how he suffered, how he prayed, how he fulfilled his daily work. He says, "As I am, so are ye in this world." We may rest assured, that a believer who has within him a full persuasion that he has been received into friendship with Jesus, will become equally conscious that a great duty is laid on him, and that on the faithful discharge of it will depend the pleasure and approbation of his Master:—"I have ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit." So did the Apostles go forth, and by their holy lives, by their unwearied labours, their faithful preaching and fervent prayers, they brought forth fruit to the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

The Apostles could not in the beginning of Christ's ministry enter fully into the signification of his words. When he spoke of suffering and bearing the cross and of persecution and death, they did not like it, and were cast down; they had secular views; and visions of worldly greatness sometimes filled their minds: "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"—But they gradually received more spiritual views: and when the time of trial came, they were prepared to suffer hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

"I have ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit." My brethren, every follower of Christ is appointed to be a witness for Jesus. If you are his friends; if this friendship is maintained by communion with him; if his friendship has become to you a source of comfort, peace and joy; if it is the thing which you above all things relish; if you would not like to live without it; you will also receive a clearer view daily of what you owe to Him, and what you should do for him. This secret communion with him, this love to him, will have such a powerful influence in regulating your actions and words, that you will regret to see any thing done which has not a tendency to honour God.

This principle within, will make a minister faithful and zealous in labouring for souls: it will make a neighbour kind and benevolent;—a parent affectionate and anxiously alive for the real welfare of his children: it will make a kind master and a faithful servant, and prompt every one to do his duty, and live godly, soberly and righteously in this present world; in whatever station he may occupy.

The primitive Christians had this simplicity of purpose. They loved their Saviour, and lived and suffered for him. By a holy unblemished walk they made Christ's salvation known to the world. This spiritual mind and disposition works out God's own end: its influence is incalculably great. If you enter a house and meet with one who lives in friendship with the Lord; what a contrast do you find here from what

you meet with elsewhere! you receive the impression at once; "Here is true religion at home! here is the right turn of mind: it is good to be here." Bethany was a consecrated spot; because Mary, Martha and Lazarus dwelt there, and Jesus was a welcome visitor in the family.

Our Lord says, "*Your fruit shall remain.*" And so it did in the case of those who heard this word from the lips of the Son of God. The fruit of their labours remains to this very day. They lived and suffered and preached the Gospel not in vain: thousands were rescued by their labour of love, and gathered as ripe sheaves into the heavenly garner: there the fruit remains and is safely kept. What God effects by his word and grace, possesses the seed of undying life in it: it cannot perish. How many ripe fruits have been gathered these eighteen hundred years into the heavenly store house! how they will shine! how they will be admired in the great day! And what in comparison, my brethren, are man's best, greatest and most celebrated works? What are the highest specimens of talent, art and science? Will *they* "remain?"—They may survive their author: but they will ere long perish and not remain. They are like the fruit which has a worm in it. In the storm it falls and rots.

Oh, let us labour to bring forth fruit which will remain; which will be to our credit, and prove hereafter what we have lived and laboured for! "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye always having all-sufficiency in all things may abound to every good work."

III. We notice *one of the main privileges of this election.* "I have chosen you, and ordained you,..... that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." Our Saviour meant to assure them, —"Since by my free gracious choice you have become my friends; provided that friendship is maintained and strengthened by the fruits of faith, I open a privilege to you which will be of the highest value: whatsoever you ask of the Father in my name, He will give it you." This, my brethren, was putting into the hands of the poor disciples the key to a treasury inexhaustible. Here was their store-house and provision for their future trying path, and against the most arduous conflicts. Humanly speaking it will stand as a miracle of an astounding nature in the world's history, that by a set of poor fishermen and publicans the Christian religion was established so firmly, as to shake, and, after three centuries, to conquer, the Roman Empire. But God was with his "chosen;" and in dependance on Him and his good Spirit they went forth. They lived in prayer and by faith, and thus overcame the world. God gave them the victory: they nourished their own souls at this fountain of life; and they found it so abundant, as to overflow and spread blessings through them, wherever they went. My dear brethren, the name of Jesus is the key to this receptacle of divine power and riches. There was great grace in the early Church, because the disciples were one in Christ.

How great and various are our wants! how poor

and destitute are we! Do any of you enquire if the door by which the disciples entered be open still? and whether—if we ask in Jesus' name, the Father be ready still to give and to bless? The answer distinctly is, Yes! you may still come, and whosoever asketh will receive, and "let him that is athirst come and take of the water of life freely." Make this glorious name of Jesus the plea and only ground of your confidence and hope, and you will find it effectual. Remember at this season* his kind declaration, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you," to be my friends, my beloved ones: I knew you as my *own* from the beginning of the world; and those who are mine, no one shall pull out of my hand! Have you a desire after him? Do you mourn over your sins? Do you desire to believe that he is the Son of God—that he is your Saviour? Do you value his word and receive it as a message of mercy to your own soul? Then you may take it for granted that he has chosen *you*, and that he will give you yet greater and fuller proofs of his good-will towards you. I know well that seasons do come, when the certainty of our adoption into the family of God becomes somewhat beclouded and doubtful. There are hours when Satan and the corruptions within, seem combined to deprive us of the enjoyment of the light of God's countenance: but the promise stands unshaken: our's is not a foundation of sand: it is rock. This foundation is sure, and hath the seal, "The Lord knoweth them that

* The Administration of the Lord's Supper.

are His." Can you say, I am His? My Lord and Shepherd knows me; I am one of the sheep of his pasture; and He cannot have chosen me, and drawn me into His heavenly communion, to let me sink and perish afterwards?

The Lord my pasture shall prepare,
And feed me with a Shepherd's care;
His bounty shall my want beguile,
The barren wilderness shall smile.

He has prepared a table before us this morning: and in presenting the visible tokens of His body, which was offered on the cross, and of His precious blood which cleanseth from all sin; He desires to re-assure us to-day, saying to each humble believer; "I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should bring forth fruit:" "These things I command you, that ye love one another:" "Come, my friends, eat and drink, and satisfy your soul with the good things of my house." May the season of the celebration of this communion be a blessed means for each willing guest, in the enjoyment of Jesus' bounty, to make his calling and election sure! Let us remember at the same time that saying of the Lord,—"Have I not chosen you twelve? but one is a devil." There may be a call, there may be election to outward appearance; and yet it may be followed by an awful fall; and some, like Judas, rise no more. We want not only repentance, but repentance deepened: we want our feeble faith strength-

ened: we want a fresh supply of oil for the lamp, that it may burn more brightly: we need not only a fresh assurance of pardon, but sin more fully mortified and the life of Christ more fully revealed within us. God grant to us in mercy that preparedness of heart, in the possession of which, all our wants shall be supplied by the riches of his grace!

TAKING UP THE CROSS.

Matt. xvi. 24, 25.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

THE occasion on which our Saviour made this declaration to His followers was peculiar, and is deserving of notice. It was immediately after he had elicited from Peter in answer to his enquiry, "Whom say ye that I am?"—the bold and beautiful confession, "Thou art the CHRIST, the Son of the living God." This was a reply which at once testified his faith in the Divine nature of CHRIST, and his knowledge of the exalted destiny for which the Lord had come down from heaven.

But although this bold disciple had so far a clear view of his Master's honours, his knowledge of His character as the Saviour of his people was as yet partial and imperfect. Peter doubtless expected, that Jesus, as the promised Messiah, would shortly set up his reign over the house of Israel, a prospect most pleasing to those who had the privilege of intimate intercourse with him. But he had not even a distant idea, that the path of Messiah was to lead through suffering and death,—a death of the most ignominious kind. It was therefore necessary that the minds of the disciples should gradually be prepared for these

things; and this was done by Jesus in the most wise and gentle manner. The Evangelist immediately after narrating the bold confession of Peter, continues,—"From that time forth Jesus began to show unto his disciples, how he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the Elders and chief Priests and Scribes, and be killed, and raised again the third day." This announcement was unexpected and unwelcome. That He should suffer death by violent hands, was, in Peter's mind, a strange idea; and perfectly irreconcileable with his views of the Son of God! He held such an event impossible; and began to think if his Master was not labouring under some mistake; and that any likelihood of it must be carefully avoided! Under this impression he said, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." For this unseasonable zeal, he was severely rebuked; and in order to prepare the minds of his followers for a course of trials in this world, similar to those he had to pass through, Jesus made the remarkable declaration, which in its general import applies to all true Christians;—"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me:" giving us clearly to understand, that as the Master was, so shall his servants be in this world; that as He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, so a certain amount of trials and crosses will be their portion, while sojourners on their pilgrimage to the realms of glory.

My dear brethren, you know the history of the life of Christ;—in its outward aspect even, the most re-

markable life we know of any child of man. He was born in poverty; he lived in humble retirement; he had not where to lay his head; he was despised by the great and noble ones in the land. Though spending a life of unparalleled purity and beneficence, he was hated and persecuted by a bigoted priesthood, and betrayed and condemned to death because he testified that he was the Son of God. Delivered up to the secular power of Rome, heathen soldiers scourged and nailed him on a cross. He is therefore represented to us in the Gospel, as the most perfect pattern of humility and self-abasement, suffering in the best of causes. From the throne of glory to the cross!—this was a descent which the human mind is unable to comprehend in its greatness. Having passed through the Red Sea of the baptism of blood, He calls upon his followers from the realms of glory,—"You must share my lot in this world, and be conformed to my sufferings and death; you must bear the cross, and die a death to sin—a death to all that the world loves and highly esteems. But though your path be rough and arduous,—fear not! I will be with you, I will carry you through. It will be but a little while,—and be assured you will find life in this death; and I will amply repay you for all the sacrifices and sufferings you have to make for my name's sake."

Let me then direct your attention to the following two points which are implied in the text.

I. WHAT CHRIST REQUIRES FROM THOSE WHO DESIRE TO BE HIS FOLLOWERS.

II. WHY A FULL AND CORDIAL COMPLIANCE WITH HIS DEMAND IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.

I. The requirement our Saviour makes of any person who desires to be his disciple is—*you must deny yourself*. It is a plain, a very reasonable but at the same time a hard and trying demand. Who that has endeavoured in any measure to come up to it, has not found its difficult and trying character? And yet it must be done: there is no question about it. The Lord has a full right to lay such an injunction upon us; and the divine command would be binding, even if we could not fully comprehend the reasons for which it has been given. But the reasons in this instance are clearly intelligible. If we were pure angelic beings, our will and inclinations would be in perfect harmony with the will of God; but we are fallen depraved beings, and our desires are constantly running in a wrong direction.

Since the day when our first parents gratified their lust in eating the forbidden fruit, human nature has become depraved. Sin is nothing but an offence against God, because a transgression of his law. He who has set up his will against the divine will, is a sinner and a rebel in practice. He may fear when he thinks of God: he may acknowledge him as his Maker and kind Preserver: but he is separated from him; he has little or nothing to do with Him; he lives for himself, and self is the moving spring of all his thoughts and actions. Do we not suffer from the pains of this moral and spiritual malady every day of

our life? Is not one sad humiliating feature of it after another showing itself in body, soul and spirit? Some see and feel it more, and others less; just according to the measure of light they possess. A man enlightened by the Spirit of truth was obliged to cry out;—"Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Another who came to a clear self-knowledge under divine teaching said;—"I am vile, and abhor myself." Others do not feel it so; and imagine themselves tolerably good, because there is no light in them: while those who are under the influence of Egyptian, heathen darkness; call darkness light, bitter sweet; and would fain disguise sin under the garb of virtue.

This sad depraved state clearly proves, that without a thorough change both in feelings and life, it is impossible for a man to re-enter into the former blessed union with God. Now the Gospel is intended to bring us back into this desirable state; and the first step in conversion is "*Deny yourself.*" Shut up the channels in which your selfish desires have been flowing, and let them be directed heavenward. Allow God the honour of which you have robbed him hitherto. After Saul the persecutor of the Church had been raging madly in persecuting God's people unto death; when the heavenly light shone into his heart, his first enquiry was, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And if any of you feel concerned about your salvation, the first enquiry on your part will be this,—"What is God's will regarding me? how can I

glorify him?" The conviction that in past days you have been too much bent on the gratification of self in various ways and honoured Him too little—yea, and have shamefully dishonoured Him,—will cause you pain and sorrow. The question then arises,—In what must I deny myself? I reply, Read your Bible, and pray for a clear and for a fuller knowledge of the will of God in this important duty; and the Spirit will reveal it to you. Many people begin at the wrong end, and remain under a slavish yoke of bondage. Let us remember that these words were spoken by Him who came to save man, and to restore to him his lost peace and happiness. It is our sinful and evil propensities which we are to put down—all which strives against the will and law of God. The Apostle makes mention of "the body of sin," "the works of the flesh," which mean all the same thing. It is not merely the evil action;—but the axe is to be put to the root. The rising lust is to be encountered as the object of unceasing conflict:—"Thou shalt not covet." And you may rest assured, that he who does not commence by watching the unseen source of the rising sin, and adopting a spiritual training, and exercising a jealous controul over his thoughts and desires,—is not likely to prove successful. Cleanse the fountain, and you will have pure water: improve the root, and the branches will bear good fruit. Our Saviour having so decidedly declared the necessity of self-denial; it cannot possibly be difficult to decide in particular cases,—for instance,—whether such and such a gratifica-

tion be within the bounds of permission or not? If a gay person ask me whether it be sinful to spend half the night in the ball room? I would repeat the reply of a judicious and exemplary minister,—"Should you like to be called away from this world that very night, from that place of mirth, and appear before the tribunal of your Judge?" Let us read and study the examples of Jesus, of his Apostles, of those holy men concerning whom we feel sure that they are gone to heaven,—how they lived, how they prayed, how they denied themselves, in pursuing after the prize, the crown of life;—how they overcame,—with what earnestness and simplicity they strove for heavenly honours,—contented at the same time with a small portion of this world's goods,—a pilgrim's portion. These glorious examples are amply sufficient to show us, in what the follower of Jesus has to deny himself, and in what manner this is to be done. And then in addition, I would set before you that beautiful and comprehensive rule of the Apostle; "Whatsoever ye do, do it all to the glory of God." And should any doubtful point arise, and your mind be in uncertainty whether such a thing is lawful or not? then try it by this infallible touchstone; "Do I in this instance glorify and honour my God or not?" This will settle the question and enable you to arrive at a satisfactory result.

The practice of self-denial is in its nature hard to the human feelings; it is like cutting off the right hand and plucking out the right eye! but it produces

good fruits ; and when the old man dies, the new man lives. The conviction that we are doing and suffering the will of God,—that we are putting the axe to the root of our moral evils and sufferings, and cutting off what would eventually cause our eternal ruin—ah ! this is very sweet and animating to a believer.

The *second* requirement of Christ is,—*Take up your cross.* Self-denial is an active duty, as we have showed. It has reference to a warfare with natural corruptions constantly maintained : whereas the taking up the cross refers *to the believer's passive obedience —his patient endurance of trials* which come from without. Whether the suffering be one sent direct by God, or by the instrumentality of a weak or ill-natured fellow-creature, it well resembles the cross which Christ bore for us ; and in bearing it, we are made to resemble him. No figure so expressive as this could be employed, to denote how mortifying and afflictive trials of this nature are to flesh and blood.

Crucifixion was a punishment inflicted by the Romans on the vilest rebels and slaves. The torments endured by the culprit were of the most agonising nature,—the blood rushing from the extended extremities with increased force towards the heart. So far did the Son of God stoop down, as to bear the malefactor's cross himself ; and on him were laid the sins of the world. It is said we must be conformed to his sufferings and death. Every believer has a portion of afflictions to bear ; not more and not less than is needed for obtaining the happy end God has in view with him !

So long as we are in a state of preparation for heaven, and living in an evil world, and Satan is not shut up in the bottomless pit,—we have each our cross to bear. But let us beware lest we *make* a cross for ourselves and prepare trials by our own misconduct. That is the heaviest of all crosses, from the conviction of guilt attending it, and no support of grace being promised under it.

Our Saviour added a *third* requirement; "*Follow me*,"—*make me your pattern and example.* That believer runs his heavenly race best, who follows the Apostle's advice,—"looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith;" and this is practicable only if we are near Him. The picture of His character contains so many lovely and attractive features, that we have something to learn from it to the end.

Why are many people so cold and heartless in religion? Why do they become liable to the most glaring inconsistencies in conduct? It is because they do not look to Jesus; and have perhaps the model of some frail admired mortal and his excellencies proposed to their imitation!

Ah! Jesus is the perfect man! In his character there is no shadow or blot! He left us an example that we should follow his steps! Ah! *where* is his love, his zeal, his desire and labour for souls, his resignation and humility,—contemplated, studied, followed? where is the mind and soul moulded into his likeness? Who cares about that? Is it not a fact, that many so-called Christians have scarcely a correct idea of what

denying themselves for Christ's sake, bearing the cross, and following him,—signifies? The fact is not even brought seriously home to the mind, that He who shed his blood for our sins, deserves this honour,—this proof of our allegiance to him, and this humble token of gratitude at our hands! And for this reason not one serious thought is entertained, of setting about the practice in good earnest, of what he has so plainly enjoined.

II. To bring the subject in its practical bearing more forcibly home to our minds, let us moreover consider, *why it is so important and necessary that we should cordially comply with these injunctions?* And here I would urge as a prominent motive, that OUR ETERNAL INTERESTS DEPEND ON IT. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things:"—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." These and numberless passages confirm the point in a most decided manner. Our heavenly Father acts with his children upon a perfect plan. Who is fool enough to prefer pebbles to gold? Ah, we are such blind beings! busying ourselves with trifles, scraping together dust, while we forget the crown of life! Now He will not allow us to do this. He calls to us, "Leave your trifles and look up! see what I have prepared in heaven for you!" Depend on it, there is a good reason for our self-denials and crosses. He wants to purify us; to take away the dross of our earthly affections; to give us something far better. If we suffer the will of God, the enjoyment of heavenly felicity hereafter

will set in the fullest light the necessity of the cross. We are unspeakable gainers in bearing it:—"Our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

In proportion as the heart is loosened from sin and the world by the cross, heavenly purity and grace will possess it, and give the tried believer a foretaste and earnest of what he shall shortly be, when mortality is swallowed up by life.

What then do we lose, if the Lord removes beloved friends and relatives to the happy place whither we are hastening? what do we lose if this frail life is taken from us? And what will be our gain from the very moment our spirit has taken its flight to a better world? Who can conceive the rapturous feeling with which the soul disencumbered from the heavy clay, the body of sin, shall hasten to the presence of Jesus! You see, then, the unspeakably glorious result, which will grow forth like a sweet fruit of our crosses. Heaven, as the reward of the suffering believer, throws a volume of light upon our darkest hours. When we come to our inheritance, that possession will explain most fully, why a kind, unerring Father allowed his children here to be so deeply bowed down in the dust. Will any of those who came out of great tribulation having washed their garments and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, think that they endured too much for their Divine Master? or shall we regret that those whom we dearly loved, were removed before us from the evil to come?

Brethren, who does not feel that we ought to have a clearer and firmer faith, in order to enable us to look beyond the mortal veil which beclouds our prospect;—to look beyond the cross to the crown! Who is not impressed with the necessity of living more habitually in the contemplation of heavenly things, which would be one of the most efficient means of increasing our strength and cheerfulness in bearing every cross!

But we must illustrate the importance of the subject from another point of view. If you have no will to deny yourselves,—if you decline suffering for Christ's sake;—your loss will be inconceivably dreadful! We are faithfully warned; "If we deny him, he will deny us;" and "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Are we followers of Christ by profession? What does this avail us, if we are not such by principle? Suppose we shrink back from the cross and are unwilling to deny ourselves, what shall we gain by sacrificing that principle to our fears or our ease? It may indeed be more agreeable to nature's feelings, to follow our own inclinations: we may save ourselves from many a task which is hard to perform, and from many a stroke which lays self prostrate to the ground, and destroys or humbles our pride;—but we shall forfeit all hope of eternal glory, and subject ourselves to the wrath of a righteous God! In this case the words will prove but too true;—"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Accept, my friends, in conclusion, a few words of exhortation and comfort, such as naturally arise from the subject. And first I would address those who bear the cross and follow Christ. Your lot is fallen in pleasant places; you have chosen the best path, although it is a narrow one. You follow him who gives his followers the best and richest reward. You know him and understand his dealings. They are peculiar to his divine plan. Often

"He moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform:
He plants his footsteps on the sea,
And rides upon the storm."

You need fear no evil. From this bitter cup of fear you are saved. Jesus gives sweet rest to his beloved: it is the Lord's portion for his people: *My peace I give you.* You can understand the ways of his providence with you: you know that the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and his ears are open unto their cry: you are under all circumstances supported by the everlasting arms: and you know that when present appearances are discouraging, all things must work togther for good to them that love God.

Is your path sometimes dark before you, and the future gloomy? Be assured, that you have for this very reason the greater right to cast all your cares upon him, and firmly to believe that He will care for you. "We walk by faith, not by sight:"

and if we glorify him by implicit confidence,—especially in the stormy day, when earthly joys and comforts fail,—he will honour us in return. God puts a sign and seal on his people: and the assurance that he is known and loved by his Master, imparts to the tried believer a firmness, a calmness and peace, which far exceed any satisfaction derived from honours and dignities of this world. Let us look to the Cross of Christ. There, on Calvary, our trials, which in their natural course are the consequence of sin, have been converted into blessings. Should we be sorry if assimilated to Jesus?—No; we should rejoice! Soon the cross will be taken down from our weary shoulders! and perhaps, before we are aware, we shall have finished our course, and rejoice in Jesus' presence with joy unspeakable and full of glory!

Lastly, one word more,—to those who *do not deny themselves, nor bear the cross, nor follow Christ!* Although you have hitherto refused him that honour, you must be well aware, that your life is in itself one of troubles and disappointments; and in addition to these, you have to bear the heaviest of all crosses, the consciousness of your guilt, and your sins unpardoned. This is a load heavy to bear! It causes many a misgiving, many an uneasy moment, and fear creeping over the very soul. The true Christian can pray and find relief in the darkest hours. But you are deprived of that comfort, and find therefore no substantial support at the time when it is most needed. Oh, dear hearers, if this is your case now,

what will it be, when death is at hand? what will it be in the day of judgment? Be not deceived by false reasoning and false comfort. Christianity is quite a different thing from what it is thought to be by the man who has only the semblance of it. It is a practical thing: it enters into every part of our conduct: it relaxes not its demands on account of man's weakness, or the difficulties he may have to encounter; but it provides us with strength to overcome them; and a glorious reward when we have overcome. Let this be fully known, that it is only if we do as Christ bids us, we are real Christians in the sight of God.

How insufficient are we for these things! and how earnestly should we seek of God that grace, without which we cannot become conquerors of sin within or without us! Excuses in things which belong to our salvation, are frivolous as well as dangerous. Many are ready to urge the difficulties which lie in the way to heaven. Many are ready to extenuate their guilt and question their responsibility, while disobeying their God. Can you speak of difficulties, if you have not tried? or object, that following Christ in that sense which he puts upon it, is impossible? *We can do it*, if we will. We shall prevail and obtain the victory, if we go forward and follow Christ. None has ever been disappointed, who began in earnest. God himself assures us that we shall overcome, if we do not love our life.

May He work in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure!

THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES.

John xv. 5, 6.

I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

Our Saviour's words on a certain occasion caused His disciples to ask,—"Who then can be saved?" They were led to propose this question by a consideration of the difficulties which attend a life of holiness in a sinful world. This difficulty is even now experienced by every sincere person, who, under a concern for his eternal interest, has been prompted to provide for himself a better portion than this world can afford. People who are within reach of the Gospel, and who have become acquainted with the will of God concerning them, feel, at times at least, the importance and obligation to lead a good, a holy life; and cannot help regretting, that they have made so little progress, or none at all perhaps, in that which concerns the welfare of their souls. Many in this respect resemble the children of Israel, who had before them the promised land flowing with milk and honey. They knew it to be a delightful land, and much to be desired;

but they became weary and discouraged by the trials of the way, and because of unbelief their carcases, it is said, fell in the wilderness.

Thus it is with too many still. We all know that heaven is a happy place; and we profess to be on the way to that eternal home. Whose heart has not been cheered and expanded with longing desire to be there, when reading the sublime descriptions of its glory? Many of those we here loved have gone before us, and await our arrival there. A cloud of witnesses urge us to speed on and to persevere. Yet, like Israel in the wilderness, we feel our strength failing. The temptation to sit down and rest and sleep, overcomes many. The path is accounted too rugged and steep. Doubts fill the mind: and whilst some despair about reaching the happy land by the time their sun is going down;—others arrive at the conclusion, that it is not worth while to make any further efforts.

You will always find, that the moments when we are most ready to listen to such harrassing doubts, and are in danger of laying aside our spiritual weapons of war, are those when we neglect to read the Bible,—our directory to heaven. Then the heart gets cold: then faith becomes dead: then the enemy has an open door for all manner of mischief.

Now, in such a state of mind, we want to be reminded of the Saviour's words,—"That which is impossible with man is possible with God." He can by the power of his grace render practicable and easy, what to our limited view appears impossible.

God promises a divine influence and support. This is what we ought to look for; and of this we must avail ourselves. Such a gracious auxiliary changes our condition at once, and removes every difficulty. Experience shows, that those who avail themselves of it, make real progress in holiness; and find their progress surprising, when compared with their unsatisfactory state before they had asked and enjoyed this divine support.

In fact, this is the great secret of vital Christianity. It promises spiritual life and strength upon a certain condition; and this condition is grounded on the frailty and depravity of human nature. This way of safety may be expressed in the words—UNION with Christ. May it be realised in our own case! and may He bless this testimony to that end! Let us consider—

I. THE UNION WITH CHRIST AND ITS RESULTS.

II. THE IMPOTENT AND RUINOUS CONDITION OF THOSE WHO ARE SEPARATED FROM HIM.

I. This union between Christ and His people is represented by him in figurative language; "I am the vine, ye are the branches." On another occasion he compared himself to a grain of *wheat*—here, to the *vine*;—the two principal sources by which nourishment, support and energy are imparted to the physical frame. There is a peculiar beauty, force and adaptation in this representation. The vine is one of the most noble plants, not for its striking appearance but for its delicious fruit. It has not the stately beauty

of the cedar on mount Lebanon, or of the grandeur and magnificence of the oak. But its fruit excels all the other fruits of the earth. On its tender branches grow the rich and luscious grapes. When the Psalmist in his song of praise enumerated the abundant gifts of providence in the fertile land of his fathers, he mentions this among the foremost; "He bringeth forth food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man."

Those who have seen a vineyard, when the branches are bending under the load of the clusters of ripe grapes, will better be able to understand what our Saviour signified by this striking simile. If the joy of the reapers is great when they are gathering in the sheaves of the harvest; the gladness is no less in the time of vintage when the grape-gatherer brings in the rich produce of his vineyard. And by what mysterious process has the berry with its purple hue been filled with the rich juice? Doubtless by the joint influences of sunshine and rain. But that which communicates the life, and promotes the growth of fruit and branches, is the sap drawn from the soil, and communicated through the roots, by a wonderful organisation of pipes or arteries, to the stem, and so from the stem to the branches. Here is the unceasing agency by which life and growth are ministered to every branch and leaf. These possess no life of their own: their nourishment and growth depend upon the root: and thus the blossom in spring, and the ripe fruit in autumn, is matured.

When therefore our Saviour said: "I am the Vine and ye are the branches," He desired to impress upon his disciples the important truth, that He is to believers what the root and stem are to the branches; that the spiritual life and nourishment and vigour which they need, are all derived from Him the root, the author of our existence and the source of every blessing; and that spiritual union with Him is indispensably necessary for the support and growth of this spiritual life.

How then can we look on a vine or any fruit-bearing tree in the garden, without being reminded of JESUS, and what he desires to be to us; and how earnestly should we seek to realise that union with him! There is no life, no peace, no solid comfort, no advancement in religion, possible without him.

If any be inclined to ask, Will God condescend to admit to his communion, sinful fallen beings,—beings so unlike himself, so degenerated and averse to what he loves, and so madly cleaving to what he hates?—we answer, Yes: he declares, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and I will be your Father, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord God Almighty." The incarnation of the Son of God,—his sufferings, death and resurrection—all the means of grace which He has deposited with his Church,—have one great object in view, which is to unite man to God, and make him fruitful in good works.

To bring about this union, Jesus prayed to his Father—"I in them and they in me, that they may be

made perfect in one." Did he so earnestly desire to realise this union, and lay down his life to make an atonement for the sins of man? Then we draw from this the sure inference, that "God loves the world," that he feels an infinite compassion for sinners, and that there is in this His own declaration, this appeal to every child of man,—"Return unto him from whom thou hast fallen, for in him is thy help to be found!"

Oh what a wonderful operation,—to become united with the Lord of heaven and earth as closely, as intimately, as the branches of the vine are joined to the root! And what a wonderful change is thereby effected, when the naturally wild and useless branches, grafted into Christ, become fruit-bearing branches! "Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit."

This union with Christ is more than acquaintance. It is even more than friendship. Where there is real union of heart and mind between two parties, there is one common object and will: the interests of both are united. Now let us apply this to Christ and the believer; and a greater source of joy and happiness cannot be conceived.

That CHRIST,—exalted as GOD and man, possessed of all power in heaven and earth,—is able to communicate blessings to his followers, we know well,—we have repeated assurances of it. Ask a true believer, what he lives for?—where his affections are?—by what

means he is enabled to live a godly life?—what makes him patient and persevering in trials?—how he can overcome the world? Ask him, how he became a changed being? and what are his resources for maintaining steadily a life and conduct so pure, disinterested and self-denying? He will in these and many other instances refer to JESUS, his unseen but present Friend. He will tell you that the real source of his holy principles, of his life and peace and strength, is He for whom, in whom, and by whom he lives; in whose blessed communion he finds the purest joy and peace; and that his sweetest moments are spent in intercourse with Him. Ah! if the stranger who has never yet entered into His sacred temple, only knew how truly an hour spent in that place satisfies the spirit, how it comforts and strengthens the happy subjects of this union; he would deeply regret his separation from Him, who cleaveth closer than a brother; he would not be so backward in seeking to be grafted into this heavenly vine; he would make the happy resolve with David,—"I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob."

This union, as our Saviour clearly shows, is productive of good results,—"*He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.*" A vine, if it be of a good kind and well cultivated, will produce fruit in the course of nature. Ah! it is a matter of joy to see the sweet fruit ripening. And thus a

real, a sound believer, one who truly lives in spiritual union with his Lord, will exhibit in his life and conversation, the fruits by which his Lord is honoured. Now "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." These are very precious fruits. They will be remembered; they ripen for heaven; they will be gathered into the heavenly storehouse. My dear brethren, do seek with more earnestness the help of God, and the means by which you may become spiritually fruitful. Our Lord wants fruit for all his labours and cares and pains for us. Nothing else will satisfy him. He once planted a vineyard, and laid it out with choice vines; and at the season, he came and sought fruit; but he found none, or the fruits he found were sour grapes. This vineyard was the first Church,—the house of Israel. Let not the complaint be uttered against us; "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore when I looked, that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"

II. We consider *the impotent and ruinous condition of those, who are separated from Christ.*

On this point he is quite clear; he says, "*without me ye can do nothing.*" This is fully proved by experience as well as by the Word of God. Christ is possessed of divine, self-existing life. He has been appointed by the Father a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins; to impart life and light to the world. Hence it follows, that he can

accomplish that change within man, which is called a spiritual new creation. He can communicate that new life, which makes a sinner to resemble Him. Without Christ assisting, supporting and living in us; fallen, weak and erring man can do nothing towards his own restoration. This is a humbling truth: many quarrel with it; they cannot get over it; it is the rock of offence over which they stumble and fall. Proud unenlightened reason pretends to know better than the Teacher come from God. It speaks thus;—"Have not many great and wise men exhibited eminent patterns of virtue, who never heard of Christianity, or never enrolled their names among the followers of Jesus of Nazareth? Do we not read sometimes eulogies of men who have gone to their last account full of their noble and generous qualities,—men who died avowed deists or infidels? Shall all their good works pass for nothing in the sight of God? Has man lost all power of moral and spiritual improvement? Has he not that within him, which, when duly fostered and developed, will advance him towards perfection?" I answer: "There is some truth in all this, so far as moral worth is concerned, between man and man. But that which is achieved by the noblest effort of man's *natural* powers, great and virtuous and glorious as the action may appear, will upon closer inspection be found to be intrinsically defective, and wanting the purity, excellency, value, worth and enduring character which would render it fit to be named among the fruits of the SPIRIT."*

* V. Article xiii. of Church of England.

Every tree produces fruit of its own kind. That which is flesh (which signifies weak, fallen, sinful nature) is flesh, and cannot produce spiritual fruit. Without the life of Christ, derived from union with him, we remain carnal creatures. Accordingly, all we do is defective and defiled, and cannot merit the approbation of God.

If those who seek to prevail by their own good intentions and merits, were candidly to examine the result of their labour; they would soon discover, that the prophet's words apply to them, "They have sown the wind: they shall reap the whirlwind." They would find that their fine outside show is like the whited sepulchre, fair to behold without, but full of rottenness within. Indeed, my hearers, we want a Saviour every day and all the day; and without him we remain helpless and heartless, disappointed and unfruitful. But abiding in Christ is more than a decent regard for religion: it is more than being a Churchman or Presbyterian or Dissenter,—more than making for one's self a religious system. It is more than tying the fruit on the tree. No real fruit will spontaneously grow out of a formal religion. We must go to the source of all. We must make Jesus our Friend. We must draw from his fulness, grace for grace. Then our success will be sure.

But separation from Christ after union with Him, incurs a more fearful judgment. A man who adopts this course, will imperceptibly wither away, as he goes further and further away from the true light, and deeper into darkness. The Lord's last awful words

clearly show, that the deliberate, wilful rejection of His friendship is followed by unfruitfulness, and an entire separation of the soul from the feelings, impressions and influences formerly received, and a falling into a state of incurable blindness; in which the light of truth finds no longer access to the mind: "*If any man abide not in me*, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

A comparison is here drawn between the cutting off from the vine of the useless branches, and the entire separation of a sinner from Christ, a state of hardened impenitence.

This cutting off refers partly to the present life, and partly to the great day of separation. There is sometimes a juncture in man's life, when divine grace appears particularly operative in bringing the soul to the great point. By His providences, as well as by powerful awakening impressions, the LORD invites, draws and moves the sinner. On a sick-bed too he may be forcibly reminded of death and the judgment to come: he may hear the words as it were sounding in his ears; "Cut down this unfruitful tree! why cumbereth it the ground?" But the voice of mercy intercedes once more—"Let it alone this year also: I will dig about it; and if it bear no fruit, then cut it down." The sinner recovers, gets up from his bed, and—forgets the solemn lesson.

When, after many a gracious visitation and endeavour of the heavenly Husbandman, the tree remains

fruitless, yea more barren than ever;—no repentance, no faith, no prayer, no seeking the means of salvation;—the man is like Pharoah of old, given up to his own hardness of heart. The dew and rain from heaven have fallen upon a rock; and the gracious influences are withdrawn. And as a branch cut off from the stem withers, and is dried up; so the sinner will become dry, hardened and dead to all that is spiritual and divine. The leaves of a formal profession drop off; and if death overtake him, his prospects will be terrible. It will be like the flinging of a withered branch into the fire. Is it not a solemn consideration, brethren,—the thought of being thus placed beyond the reach of grace, sealed for destruction; the last glimmering spark of light and truth and hope extinguished in the soul, and nothing remaining but a fearful prospect of divine wrath and fiery indignation?

Now these are no extravagant and fanciful notions: they are an essential portion of God's eternal truth. The great day of revelation will manifest them as such. It will then be clearly seen,—though many a death-bed discloses it partially even here,—that those who have resisted the Gospel, and would not let it come home to their hearts; have declined step by step, lost their impressions, and then cast off religious feelings and principles altogether, and fallen into divers errors and lusts, till they departed to the everlasting fire; because, by renouncing the sinner's only remedy, they rendered themselves unfit for the blessed inheritance among the saints in light.

Let me, in improving this subject, address a word of caution to any who may be unacquainted with the *union* our Saviour recommends to Christians. This spiritual oneness is not only desirable,—let me assure you, there can be no heart religion without it! If you are in any degree concerned about it, if you enquire,—How can I make progress? how can I bring forth fruit and glorify my God?—let it be known that the first thing you have to do, is to be grafted upon the true root and stem, that is,—to be united by faith to Christ.

Your own heart tells you, that you ought thus to glorify God: your conscience tells you that *now*, in your state of separation from him, you are indeed as a branch cut off, withered, lifeless.

I knew in my early years a person of this description, who was painfully exercised under these feelings: at last, after hearing an impressive sermon, he went to open his mind to the minister; but he found not how to open his lips. The minister shewed him in his garden two vines: one was laden with grapes, and the other was fruitless and dying away. The man looked at the latter until at last the tears gushed from his eyes! "Oh! Sir," he said, "I am this withered vine!" From that moment the man was changed, and he became indeed a fruitful branch in Christ.

Ah! brethren, should the sight of our barrenness not call forth similar emotions? Oh hasten to your Saviour! pray the Lord to receive you now, for to-morrow it may be too late. Or, are there any here who once

knew the Lord, once enjoyed the pleasure of fellowship with him; but have declined, have relaxed in prayer, and whose lamp is nearly extinguished; who have lost the access to that place, where new life and new grace are to be obtained?

Oh! what have you lost! Compare your former feelings and enjoyment with what you have now, while halting, as you do, between two opinions. Can you say you have peace, while ensnared in the net of the tempter? You know the truth from personal experience; "Without me ye can do nothing." You have nothing to show but bare leaves. The fruit is wanting: the storm has shaken it all down, or a worm has devoured it. May God give you grace to return like Peter!—to weep bitterly as he did, and then to love your Lord more fervently than ever.

Lastly, one word more to the real branches, which possess life and bear fruit. Realise for a moment the honour which God has put upon you!—to be a friend of Jesus, attached to Him and He to you, the eternal omnipotent King who is adored by Cherubim and Seraphim!—to be able to say; "My beloved is mine and I am his." This was the great and glorious truth in which the aged Apostle exulted, when he exhorted his brethren; "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." Let me then repeat the advice of JESUS,—"*Abide in me.*" Be determined at any cost to maintain this communion. If any thing harmless and innocent, as it may appear to you, should weaken that union, and have a

tendency to draw your affections away from him, let it be given up as a willing sacrifice; and rather lose every thing, than cease to possess his love, his peace, his approbation.

He demands sacrifices; and he has a right to do so. But where is the believer, who has given up anything, and denied himself for Christ's sake, who has not already found himself amply rewarded in this life?

And do not forget the pruning knife of the great Husbandman. The finest fruit tree would run wild and spend all its strength and vigour in putting forth useless branches, if the gardener allowed it: but he cuts off the wild shoots and withered boughs, and it bears abundant fruit. Think it not a grievous thing therefore if God tries you. Affliction strikes at the root of sin; and the sweetest fruit ripens in the heat of the day.

Our gain will be great, if we allow this good Husbandman to perfect his work in us, according to his own plan: and if patience has its perfect work, in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. The sheaves full ripened—the Vine branches laden with fruit—shall be gathered by angels into the garner of God. Such honour shall have all his saints.

THE STRAYING SHEEP AND THE LAMB OF GOD.

Isa. liii. 6, 7.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

THESE words of humble confession and prophetic vision are taken from that remarkable chapter, which foretells the sufferings and death of MESSIAH. It does this in a manner as circumstantial and minutely correct, as if the writer had been an eye-witness of the memorable scenes, when Jesus was numbered with transgressors—in the high priest's palace, in the judgment hall of Pilate, and on the blood-stained brow of Calvary.

A very remarkable incident in this chapter is the manner in which the words, in the verse descriptive of man's fallen condition, are placed. They seem to come in quite abruptly. You cannot at once discover their connection with the foregoing part and that which follows. After describing the suffering Messiah in this emphatic manner; "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our ini-

quities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed," the prophet has before him a new vision,—the human family in its fallen helpless condition, like a flock of sheep scattered in the desert; and he exclaims, "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way." But a little calm reflection will show you at once, that the sad condition here pointed out stands in close connection with the whole chapter: in fact it was our ruined state, which prompted the Son of God to come from heaven and endure all the sorrows, which are so feelingly described.

Let me direct your devout attention this morning to the facts here brought to our notice.

I. MAN'S CONDITION.

II. CHRIST'S MEDIATION.

III. HIS CONDUCT UNDER HIS SUFFERINGS.

I. *Man's condition.* This is described in the text in the most simple and touching manner,—"All we, like sheep, have gone astray." Our first parents in Paradise walked before God. God was their Father: they lived in a most delightful intercourse with Him. His will was their will: they had no other desire, no other rule of conduct but His will. It was a state of felicity, unmixed felicity: for to live with and in God is the great object of man's creation. All was right, all was peace within them; so long as this happy relationship remained undisturbed.

Need I say that it is thus no more, my brethren? We have the plainest proof before us, that we are fallen

rebellious beings! Our own every-day proceedings, the bent of our minds, the passions of our hearts,—declare it. Paradise is no more found on the earth; and if it were, man is no longer fit for it. Adam's first-born became a fugitive and went forth from the face of the Lord; and like Cain, we have forsaken our God, our Father's house.

And mark here the universality of this fallen, straying condition,—"*All we*, like sheep, have gone astray." Not merely our neighbours the Hindoos, and other idolatrous nations,—though they, thinking themselves to be wise, have become fools, "and have changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things;" and are certainly far gone from God and righteousness. Nor would it be right and proper if, in reading this statement, we think only of people of the baser sort, such as we find in houses of correction, or among the ignorant multitude—who have had no education and cultivation of mind. No, brethren: *we all*, like sheep, have gone astray. That Pharisee with his decent and moral appearance, who prayed, "Lord, I thank thee, that I am not like other men," had in all probability often read our text; but he had no clear understanding of it.

Many have a wonderful dexterity in managing to get out of the black book; ready to say,—"This touches me not:—they must be very bad and depraved people of whom such a thing can be said: 'All we, like sheep, have gone astray!'" They admit that the world is

wicked; they admit that their neighbours are very bad. They willingly admit that sin and iniquity abound,—that there is very little sincerity, and that deceit in all its shapes is to be met with in every direction. But once try and come with them to the point. Try and make them enter into the prophet's confession, honestly, cordially,—"All we have gone astray;" "all we,"—as well the outwardly moral, decent and respectable, as the openly notorious and profligate;—"all we" who are called Christians, who think we belong to God's people;—"all we have gone astray:"—this is thought too much to acknowledge.

We have gone astray *like sheep*. There is much instruction in this simile. It shows that while in a straying state, as fallen beings who have left their God, their Father's house; we are placed indeed in a forlorn and hopeless position. A sheep is a stupid and helpless animal. God has made some animals to take care of themselves: but a sheep cannot; it wants constant care and protection: in fact, without a shepherd it cannot get on at all; and will soon become a prey of wild beasts, or sink from the inclemency of the weather or want of pasture. And yet no animal is more prone to wander: and when it has gone astray, none is less fit to find its way back to its proper place. Here, brethren, we have a striking representation of our own condition in this world. What is man without God? what is sinful fallen man without the heavenly Shepherd, Jesus Christ? A wretched wandering way-worn being. Yet "He has made us, and not we ourselves,"—

"we are his people and the sheep of his pasture." This was the end of our creation. Had we remained in our original estate, how well had it been with us!—no good thing had been wanting. That which nourishes and strengthens our immortal part,—the heavenly pasture, the bread and water of life—would have been abundantly supplied to us. But we have left the God of all grace. So corrupt is our fallen nature, that we are blind to duty, to our privileges, our safety, and our peace. We know the will of God; yet our wayward tendency is to escape, and roam about in sin's forbidden ground. How sad is our state! Even when gathered into the fold, how many are our wanderings! how often do we forget ourselves and our destiny! "Who can understand how oft he offendeth?"

My brethren, every idle word, every uncharitable thought or judgment, every act of unkindness, is a wandering from God. Every lust unmortified, every temptation allowed, every burst of sinful passion or temper, is a wandering from God. The world is full of snares, to entangle and lead us captive again, after we have escaped from its pollutions. When we ask ourselves at the end of a single day,—even a Sabbath-day;—Where have my affections been to-day?—what have been my thoughts? Alas!—too frequently wandering, and out of the right way. How happy would be our lot, if we ever kept with the Shepherd, and in the company of those who find their purest delight in his pasture!

Then again, a wandering, straying sheep is in a

dangerous condition? What good can he expect who has withdrawn himself from the protecting hand of his God? His own conscience must bear witness that the way he goes is not the right one; and what begins in disobedience must end in misery and ruin. In the desert there is the roaring lion, always going about and seeking whom he may devour. Let a man once allow himself to come under a Satanic influence, and I will foretell him where it will end with him;—"The wages of sin is death." It may appear pleasant for a while to indulge in the delusive dreams of sin: it may do in days of health to prop up his courage by sceptic thoughts and infidel language,—saying, "Is there knowledge in the Most High? do you think He takes notice of all our particular ways?" But he will find it difficult to persuade himself that he is in the right, when the hand of the Lord lies heavy on him, when troubles come in like a flood. Then feelings undergo a remarkable change. Cecil said, "When young, I was an infidel; but I was one with my companions in sin." The delusion of sin may be kept up, while things go on straight, while the sun of prosperity shines; but when darkness, dreary mental darkness comes on, and death stares the sinner in the face, then he finds out his error,—an error which too often has proved irreparable. For it is one of the cruel devices of the great adversary, that after keeping up the delusion in the wayward wanderer by lying suggestions for years, he at length leaves him to himself. The plain truth then appears, "The serpent has beguiled me;" and

he falls into a low desponding mood; or even worse,—into despair,—as Judas went and hanged himself. I have little hope of a person who in earlier years received good impressions, became serious and walked in the good way;—if he forsakes the Guide of his youth and listens to the deceiver. Such cases are generally hopeless. There is then a resemblance not only to the strayed sheep, but to something worse. The heart is all wrong: the judgment is clean perverted: there is impenetrable darkness. The unclean spirit which had gone out of the man, "taketh to himself seven other spirits, more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there, and the last state of that man is worse than the first."

Remember then, brethren, that the sinner wandering from God cannot find his way back again. There are people who when brought to confess their wandering condition, try to seek comfort from thinking, "we can return whenever we like." Depend upon it, the sinner cannot find his way back to God! How many have gone astray, and where are they now? Gone—not to the heavenly fold, but like Judas to their own place. The truth is, we must be divinely brought back. This is the great work of Him who came to seek and save that which is lost, and who declared, "no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

The Prophet continues,—"We have turned every one to his own way." This is a very significant and searching expression. "The way of the Lord," said an eminent divine,* "is right: it is plain and exceed-

* Hanbleker.

ingly simple." If a sinner's heart is changed, the ways of God will appear not only easy and plain but delightful to him. But the ways of sin are manifold; they go in every possible direction, varying according to the disposition, taste and habits of people. Every man has his own favourite indulgence, his own easily besetting sins. But the root and foundation of all is *selfishness*. He likes his own, he seeks his own, he cares for his own, as if nobody were in the world but his highly favoured self. This, brethren, is "turning to our own way." Now upon this ground of man's selfishness Satan has a powerful influence. There is *his* workshop. Let a man maintain his *own way;* and the strong man armed will keep his possession undisturbed. Such a man has his aim, his object steadily before him: it is his own way: nothing will move him. And here it is that the arch-enemy deceives him. He can see no harm in it, because it suits his own inclination. Besides he may be very moral, very good all the while: he may rebuke vice, and lament the prevailing evils around him. But as to "*his own way*," *there* he can see no harm,—*there* he is immoveable.

Oh, brethren, what says the Lord to such a one?—"My ways are not your ways;" "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts." "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways." You see the text points out that hateful selfishness, that unconcern for the welfare of others, that pride and arrogance of heart, which freely grow out of nature's soil. It is Cain's disposition, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

And in its reference to God, it is that bold and daring rebellion which disowns his superior influence and authority and government.

Ah! let us try our own ways and compare them with God's ways. The paths of the Lord are holy and righteous: man's ways are selfish and unholy. We ought to go to the standard of the Divine word; and try our ways, our thoughts, our principles: we ought to pray for divine guidance to lead us into God's own way.

Many refuse to do this; and therefore we see so little true conversion of heart and soul to God. If we could allow men to go on in their "own way," all the world would approve of our doctrine. But because we show a change of heart to be an absolute necessity, therefore our exhortation is distasteful. But God's work must be done: and the Lord's faithful servants cannot hesitate as to the choice between pleasing Him or the world.

II. We come now to the second point: the *mediatorial work of Christ:—The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.* Now this, my brethren, is the great doctrine which Paul and Peter preached so boldly as the grand fundamental truth of Christian faith and doctrine. The Epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians are full of it, and exhibit the great fact in the clearest light. Let me select only one or two passages to show how the Apostolic teaching harmonizes with the word of prophecy: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a

curse for us." Again, "God hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." And so in Peter; "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." You are aware that these expressions have a reference to those ceremonies in the Mosaic law, by which the atoning sufferings and death of Messiah were foreshewn to the believing Israelite. Before the blood of the sacrificial beasts was sprinkled upon the altar as a sin-offering, the sins of the suppliant offerer were typically transferred to the *sacrifice*. He was, by this solemn visible act, taught to expect and look forward to the advent of ONE who was to take away the iniquity of His people. And what was the great theme of the Apostles in preaching the Gospel? Simply this:—they pointed to Christ crucified and his resurrection, declaring that he was the Messiah concerning whom Moses and all the prophets had spoken; —that his sufferings and death constituted the great mediatorial work, through which forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God could be obtained by all that believed.

The idea of sin being transferred from the offender to another who paid the penalty for it, was not new to the Israelites. On the contrary, their services in the temple made them familiar with it. God in his wise Providence had for centuries prepared them for it. And should not the Christian, in reading the solemn story transacted on Calvary in his New Testament, be equally familiar with the glorious fact? Should he not rejoice and thank God, as he keeps

another Passion week, over the truth—"He has laid on Him the iniquity of us all?" My hearers, make these words practical and personal: "My sins were laid on Jesus!—not only those of the past year, since we last celebrated the remembrance of his death, though they amount to many; but the whole uncounted mass, committed from my first hours, when reason and conscience came into operation; and not mine only, but those of my fellow-sinners of the millions of human beings and responsible agents who breathe and move and offend God in this world. And God the Father has done the work. He has laid this enormous load upon his dear beloved Son."

He was selected from the beginning, to bear the sins of the world. The glorious adorable Trinity was engaged in this blessed work. The Father delivered up the Son, and by a judicial act transferred these sins of guilty man to Christ. The Son consented, and submitted to bear the dreadful load. And there is a third Divine Agent, who visits the sinner's soul, who bears testimony in that hidden place, man's spirit, first—in order to direct serious attention to that great mediatorial work,—to show the greatness and wickedness of sin, to bring the sinner to mourn and repent; —and then to lead him to the blood of atonement, as the refuge, the place of safety, the source of peace.

And depend on it, without this third One in the blessed Trinity,—this heavenly Comforter,—no human being can truly understand, no sinner can truly value

and believe, and come to the enjoyment of this mediatorial work of Christ.

It is the Spirit who glorifies Him in the heart. Now if the justification of sinners required such a price, and the removal of their guilt such an awful penalty from Him who engaged to take it upon himself; I would solemnly caution you;—Do not seek your justification in yourselves. We have lost every claim to it. Go to the right place, where sinners are directed to go, and plead for it,—even to Him who calls upon a guilty world, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

III. We can but briefly touch on the last affecting part of our subject;—*the conduct of Messiah under his sufferings;* "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth." This affords us some insight into what was passing in the mind of Christ in Gethsemane, and when standing arraigned as a criminal before his unrighteous judges. Well might he feel bowed down and crushed by a load of evil which overwhelmed his soul;—not inherent evil,—but sin imputed;—laid on, mass upon mass, burden upon burden. The Psalmist represents him in those moments, as a person in the act of drowning,—"All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me:" and in another place, as one whose vitals are giving way and breaking down:—"I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; thou hast brought me into the dust of death."

—"He was *afflicted!*"—The deepest mental agony of which sinful man in his lowest state of depression and inward grief is capable, can give no adequate conception of His sufferings. It was a bitter cup which he had to drink to the dregs. His human nature, constituted just like ours in its sensibilities, shrunk from it; and he desired, if it were possible, it might pass from him. But it was not possible: the redemption of man required the dread ordeal; and the Son of God endured it to the last.

The concluding words present Him in the most affecting and, I would venture to add, in the most endearing character; "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." Could you read any thing more striking, more beautiful? In the first part of the text we have heard of the straying sheep, its wandering, perverse and lost condition. Here is the suffering and dying Messiah, presented as the spotless lamb,—dragged to the slaughter house;—his own brethren committing the horrid act. As he complains in the prophet;—when one enquires, "What are these wounds in thy hands?"—"Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." The greatest sin committed by a nation which possessed the light of revelation, was that which the Jews committed in rejecting and murdering the Son of God!—And how have they been visited for it!

But we are to view the subject from a sublimer point. We are to contemplate at this solemn season,

the meek disposition with which Jesus bore the cross for us. It is twice said, "He opened not his mouth;"—"As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." We have many stories of fortitude and patience on record in history; but did ever man bear his trials as Jesus did? Did ever child of man suffer thus, who, when false witnesses were brought forward to accuse and convict him of blasphemy, remained silent and answered not? When, before Pilate, they charged him with sedition and rebellion against Cæsar's authority, "he opened not his mouth." When the soldiers tore off his raiment and dressed him in a mock-purple robe,—when they spat in his face,—He meekly bore it. And when the murderous act was accomplished and the Holy One was suspended like a common malefactor on the tree—he *did* open his lips; but it was in prayer for his enemies! Oh how adorable does the Son of God appear in these last scenes on Calvary!

Not very long after the fulfilment of this prophecy, a Gentile foreigner who had been visiting Jerusalem, was again travelling homewards. He was a man of eminence, attached to a royal court; we should call him in our days a minister of finance. He was reading in his chariot the prophet Isaiah; and the very same passage on which we have been meditating this morning, arrested his deep attention. He thought, Who can this man be? "Of whom speaketh the prophet this—of himself, or of some other man?" By a direct intervention of God, the Evangelist Philip met this noble enquirer on the road at

that moment; and he opened unto him the Scripture and preached to him JESUS; and the man who was so forcibly struck by this affecting description, was converted and baptized the same day. My brethren, if any thing is calculated to touch a sinner's heart, to produce feelings of humility, repentance, faith, gratitude; it is doubtless the story of Christ's sufferings and death.

If any thing can mortify our pride, and bring us soberly to reflect on ourselves,—to think of our sins, to think of their eternal consequences, and to think of God's infinite love—it is the affecting fact, "Behold the Lamb of God!" which we commemorate this day.

Oh, brethren, read over the narrative once more; study it; pray over it. If the Spirit at this hour has brought you to feel, in hearing the prophetic words; "I am one of those lost and straying sheep; I have hitherto looked to and pursued my own way,—my selfish, unholy, sinful, ungodly way;"—then, let me advise you, weary wanderer, to stop short for once, and realize that God laid on His own Son your iniquity; that in the Lamb of God thus slain, the redemption was accomplished by which alone you can escape the wrath due to sin.

Believe this. Improve the ransom—and you will be saved.

CHRIST THE FIRST-FRUITS OF THEM THAT SLEPT.

1 Cor. xv. 20.

But now is CHRIST *risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.*

THE festival we are celebrating to-day,* awakens feelings of joy in the Christian's heart. The Apostle, after demonstrating the certainty of the resurrection of Jesus the Lord, pronounces the truth of it with a kind of joyful triumphant feeling. And he did so with the full conviction, that the fact established was the grandest, sublimest event that had ever taken place in the history of the world. He could speak with a feeling of certainty on the great subject which engaged his whole attention, and which he was ready to publish abroad to the ends of the earth.

My brethren, we are this day forcibly reminded, that there is something in Christianity, which gives it a peculiar, a glorious character;—which enlarges and elevates the mind;—which is well calculated to raise the weary pilgrim, and carry him beyond the scenes of this poor world;—which reminds him of a hereafter—a better state. Christianity maintains unrivalled pre-eminence over all human religious systems, if judged by its intrinsic moral excellence. The ennobling effect Christianity exercises upon the human mind; the improvement it produces, in society and

* Easter Sunday, 1851.

individuals, wherever it is allowed free course,—prove its origin to be divine.

But Christianity would after all be an imperfect system, if it left man to his own resources when arrived in the dark valley of death. The Gospel therefore preaches both faith and *hope*. When heart and strength do fail, we are not left in the dark. The risen Saviour has opened the portals of heaven. The King of Glory has entered the everlasting gates.—They stand wide open still, for all that are His to enter;—and they will not be shut,—so long as there remains a sinner on earth to be saved.—Let me propose to your devout meditation this morning,—THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST:—

I. AS A FACT FULL OF JOY AND CERTAINTY.

II. AS A FACT FULL OF HOPE.

I. *The fact full of certainty and joy:—But now is Christ risen.* The Apostle felt as sure of the reality of it as he was of his own existence. His assurance of it rested upon that sound and solid evidence, which is credited and accepted in all human transactions,—the testimony of a large number of good men, sincere, upright, trustworthy characters:—"He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve, after that he was seen of more than five hundred brethren at once. And last of all," he says, "he was seen of *me* also." The same disciples both male and female, who stood near the cross, when the Saviour cried "It is finished,"—and bowed his head and gave up the ghost—who saw the Roman soldier piercing his side with a spear;—beheld Jesus

alive with their own eyes on the morning of the third day, speaking with them, and eating with them. In fact no historical event in the history of our Saviour is recorded with greater minuteness than that of his resurrection. The evangelists enter into all the smallest details of it, with almost scrupulous conscientiousness; and each of them touches upon some peculiar and interesting incidents. For instance, St. Matthew tells of the Angel descending from heaven and rolling the stone away from the mouth of the grave; and the Roman guard shaking and becoming like dead men. Mark and John relate how he appeared to Mary Magdalene first,—asking her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" Luke records how he met the eleven in the evening, when they were assembled within closed doors for fear of the Jews; and he also tells us of that most affecting meeting of the Lord with the two disciples who were going to Emmaus.—The same feeling, the same certainty appears to have animated the Apostles and Evangelists concerning the truth of the Resurrection of their Lord. They felt that it was the key-stone which held and cemented together the whole structure of Christianity. They evidently spoke and wrote under the impression, that every thing depended upon it.

Let us glance for a moment at some of the *reasons which rendered the resurrection of Christ such a vitally important event*. First I would mention that *the truth of prophecy depended upon it*. We are all agreed that the fulfilment of the word of prophecy consti-

tutes one of the strongest evidences of our religion. Now there are numbers of passages in the Old Testament in which the resurrection of Messiah is clearly foretold. One of the most striking is that to which the Apostles in their preaching frequently allude, in Psalm xvi; "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see *corruption*." Now, if the body of Christ had remained in the grave, if it had *seen corruption*, Scripture would have belied itself: there would have been an end of placing confidence in it. The deist would not be slow in casting in our teeth,—"I grant that what was foretold of Jesus' death was fulfilled to the letter: he died, and was buried, and is gone,—but what proof have you of his being alive—being a Saviour?—none at all."

Again, *the veracity of Christ himself depended upon his resurrection;* for he repeatedly foretold to his disciples that the Son of Man should be crucified and rise again the third day. In fact, all his teaching had more or less a reference to a glorified state, upon which he was to enter after his state of humiliation on earth. He professed that he was the Son of God:—he acknowledged before Pilate that he was a King, but that his kingdom was not of this world. He assured his disciples, that after a very little while he would come and see them again. He instituted the sacred supper as a memorial of his atoning death, till He comes again: and in reference to Faith in His Cross he declared, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him

up at the last day." Now his resurrection stamps Divine truth, and reflects a heavenly light, upon his promises and teaching. Considered in connection with that fact, his doctrines become as clear and intelligible as noon-day.

Again, *the reality of our salvation depends upon the resurrection of Christ.* We want a living Saviour, and not a dead one; one who possesses the vigour and essence of self-existent life in himself. If death had conquered him, there could be no hope for us: "Then our preaching is in vain, and our faith is also vain,"—an idle delusion,—"we are yet in our sins; and they also who are fallen asleep in Christ are perished."

Once more I would say that *the glory of God was concerned in the resurrection of Christ.* The Bible contains a Divine plan: it is a grand and glorious plan; it extends in its operations through centuries. Its foundation was laid in Chaldæa when Jehovah called Abraham to forsake his native land near the banks of the Euphrates, and when after reaching Canaan, He committed to him the sacred promise in deposit,—"In thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." The end and object of the plan was the establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth: and the resurrection of Christ is its crowning point! This is the light which illumines the whole structure. The honour of God was engaged in bringing this glorious scheme to its full accomplishment.

It had to struggle with great difficulties. Satan and a wicked world have ever been up—busy to de-

stroy it. The Pharisees doubtless fancied they had done their work in a masterly manner, when Pilate after much hesitation passed sentence of death upon the innocent Jesus. The devil with his legions of infernal spirits, raised a triumphant and malignant shout when the Son of God hung on the cross. The conspired band of enemies doubtless considered their base object accomplished to perfection, when the stone was sealed and the sepulchre guarded by a band of sixty-four Roman soldiers. But neither the vigilant watch nor the seal could hinder the work of God from being accomplished. When His hour was come, God glorified His Son. Nothing was more easy, nothing more simple to Him, than to undo the machinations and intrigues of powerful chiefs and hardened sinners. They not only could not hinder the work of God; but Priests and Pharisees, Herod and Pilate, Roman soldiers and a Jewish mob,—the whole motley assembly of evil-doers,—were in their blind fury and contemptuous pride, the unconscious instruments for accomplishing a design, of which they had not a distant idea,—a design which nevertheless was so clearly foretold in the Scriptures! Considered even as a simple, historical fact; there never has taken place a transaction, in which a combination of human malice and wickedness was so completely foiled; and where innocency and moral excellency were more fully established. It is well, my brethren, and useful to scrutinize the evidence of our holy faith; and especially the certainty of the resurrection of Christ; to bring it clearly

home to our minds; to strengthen and establish ourselves in it.

In this Chapter however, the Apostle did not demonstrate his subject before the rulers of the people,—but to his beloved brethren. To the former he and Peter spoke in other terms, when he told them,—what no Pharisee dared to gainsay,—"Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses."

To his brethren at Corinth the Apostle presents the good news in this manner, "But now is Christ risen from the dead!"

This is indeed a blessed "*now*,"—a bright, joyful morning, after a long and weary night; after many of the fathers had fallen asleep, who longingly cried out, "Oh, that salvation were come unto Israel!" and after many a true expectant Israelite had enquired; "Watchman what of the night?" Now the full day of the Gospel was risen. "Rejoice, and again I say rejoice!" Such is the message which is to be proclaimed to the world on Easter-day.

It is worth while to present to ourselves the situation in which the disciples were a few hours before; and then their sudden and unexpected change from a night of weeping to a morning of joy. From that solemn night in the garden, when Jesus was taken by the band led by Judas, *their* situation was a deplorable one. They were dispersed,—cast into the

lowest depths. They could not understand this end of their Lord: they considered all lost—hopelessly irretrievably lost. They seemed to have been paralysed at head as well as heart. It was as if they had forgotten every word their Master had told them of this very event! But so it is, when distress and anxiety overwhelm the mind;—when, as in the case of Peter, a guilty conscience adds reproach and fear to grief; the mind loses its balance, and is unfitted for its proper functions. The lamp of faith burned very dimly indeed; its oil was exhausted; and it was well nigh being extinguished.

Little indeed did the disciples imagine what the Sunday morning would bring forth. What must have been their feelings when the first news from Mary Magdalene reached them! Why, the first effect was this;—they would not believe it! it seemed too good to be true. And when the last shadow of doubt was at length dispersed;—when those two witnesses from Emmaus gave their testimony likewise—"We have seen him; and he spoke to us, and opened to us the Scriptures from Moses and the Psalms, shewing that Christ must suffer and enter into his glory;"—and when at evening he entered the door where the eleven were assembled;—"then"—it is said,—"then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord."

My brethren, we can behold Him even now standing on the grave victorious. And may we not share in the joy of the eleven, and of the women who went early to the sepulchre? How the condition of man has

been changed by this glorious event, even regarding the present life! We now can rejoice that we are human beings. A new Divine life is secured to us. We can shake off our sorrows and our burdens. *Christ is alive!* and he dieth no more. He sends his salutation to us all,—"Tell it to my brethren and to Peter,"—mentioning by name the deeply fallen but repenting disciple—because He saw him weeping bitterly in secret places. Is there not perhaps such a mourning penitent here, who would fain hear such a pleasant message,—such a kind salutation from the Lord of life?

II. We consider *Christ's resurrection as a fact full of hope.* In regard to this point the Apostle states;—"He is become *the first-fruits of them that slept.*

By this significant expression is opened to us a bright and hopeful prospect into a future state. The resurrection of our Lord was accompanied with an earthquake.—This earthquake opened not only the Redeemer's grave, but it opened the graves of many that were asleep. By the curse of God upon sin, heaven had become brass and the earth iron. Those who slept in the earth would have been kept in the bands of death, but for this mighty movement on the blessed morning. We are reminded of the words—"Yet once more I shake not the earth only but heaven also." Yes! that event will exercise a blessed effect upon the bodies of all his saints.

The resurrection of Christ sheds a radiant light upon the gloomiest part of man's history.

The earth has become a great cemetery. We are

walking upon the dust of the departed. Where are the generations that have flourished for these six thousand years past? They are gone! Where are the great giants,—of iron frame and intellect? Where are the Nimrods, the conquerors and enslavers of empires? Where are the celebrated legislators and philosophers? Where are the proud spirits, who acknowledged none above them,—who demanded in sullen defiance, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?" They all sleep the sleep of death! and who shall awake them?—But let us turn from ages and generations gone by; let us look at what takes place around us so frequently. What scenes are more common than funeral scenes? How often is the grave-digger at work! Again and again we stand before the open grave, and we hear the heavy clods descend upon the narrow tenement, which encloses the mortal remains. Again and again we commit dust to dust, ashes to ashes.

Yes, this body of ours—this wonderful, and, in youth's freshness and vigour, beautiful structure and masterpiece of the Creator,—the noblest part of the whole creation,—will break down. After the busy scenes of a short life—it will turn to corruption and must be removed from the presence of the living. After all our numberless wants here—satisfied and unsatisfied—what do we want at last?—A little narrow chamber, three paces long. Abraham acquired no landed property in Canaan save a spot for his burial! He said to the sons of Heth—"Give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my

dead out of my sight."—It is a humiliating and deeply affecting sight, to witness these last scenes; and our grief over the departed ones would be unmitigated, had we to sorrow as those who have no hope.*

But Christ is become the first fruits of them that slept! He is the Saviour of the body as well as of the soul. "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead!" The blood of the Redeemer has removed the curse from the earth; and his blessed body, which rested for a little while in earth, has sanctified it to become a sacred depository for those who are now resting in hope.

In the first French Revolution the atheists at Paris wrote over the gate of the great cemetery this inscription: "Death is an eternal sleep." Such are the infidel's prospects. Over the entrance into a Christian burying ground the words might be written: "I am the resurrection and the life!" or the words of St. Paul,—"Christ is become the first-fruits of them that slept!"—The simile beautifully illustrates the Christian's hope.—The Jews had a festival, which was called the Day of the First-fruits. It was celebrated on the very day of Christ's resurrection. By a Divine ordinance (see Levit. xxiii. 10, 11,) a sheaf of the first-fruits of their harvest was to be presented before the Lord early on the festive morning; and it was accepted as a pledge of the coming harvest.

* That the Hindus sorrow thus is evident from such expressions as:—Ámár santán nasta haiáchhe,—"My child has perished!"

This sheaf of the first fruits sanctified the whole harvest. The blessing of God rested on the gifts of the earth for the use of man.—There is a passage which has an important connection with this:—"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." This, Jesus spoke of his death and resurrection. The sacred corn of his body was permitted by his Father—the great Husbandman—to die and to be deposited in the earth in hope. But it was not to remain there long. It soon rose in heavenly beauty: and this first fruit—the sheaf ripened—was presented in the upper temple, the Holy of Holies,—as an acceptable offering to God. The Israelite presented his sheaf with great joy—because it was a sure token of the ripening harvest. Ah, what a glorious harvest is now ripening in the earth, as the blessed result of Jesus' resurrection and going to the Father!

Remember then, Christian brethren, that the bodies of believers, like Christ's body, rest in hope. It is true they see corruption—yet they shall rise incorruptible.

The words of the Apostle have a retrospect view;—"*those that slept.*" The hope here expressed was that of the Patriarchs and Prophets, who fell asleep before the coming of Christ. But the martyrs and saints from Stephen until our own days, have rejoiced in the same hope ere they fell asleep. The bodies of believers are so many seed-corns, sown in hope of the great resurrection harvest. This is a glorious hope!

My brethren, when divine grace dwells in the heart, —when the new life of Jesus has been conveyed to a soul,—the body partakes of its sanctifying effect too. That life is the vital germinating principle which will fit both *soul* and *body* for the better resurrection.

Death is then no more death, but a sleep,—a sweet hopeful sleep. It is said, Stephen "fell asleep"—though he sunk under a shower of stones!

When therefore we close the eyes of our beloved ones, and when we deposit the mortal part in the ground; remember it is a sowing in hope. When the sisters wept over the beloved brother of Bethany, Jesus said, "Your brother shall rise!" When the only son of his mother was carried to the grave at Nain, Jesus said to the widow, "Weep not!"—When the funeral music was sounding in Jairus' house of mourning, Jesus said, "The maid is not dead but sleepeth!" These words were hopeful words, they were resurrection thoughts.

Truly, brethren,—standing as we do in spirit this morning at the open sepulchre of the living Redeemer —we can view death in a very different aspect from the heathen and the world. It is but a little while, and we shall see with our own eyes, what we now believe and hope for.

Let us make our calculations and our preparations accordingly; even as the Apostle did, when he said,— "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Here we suffer, we fear, we groan, we weep ;—often we creep along as on a thorny path :—but what are all these trials, when Jesus is near? what are they, when he imparts sanctifying grace? what are they in the most painful instances, but so many blessings in disguise?—When we attend the dying bed of a true believer; what is death in such a case? Have you never witnessed it? Why, it is spoiled of all its terrors!—a truly delightful heavenly scene,—because the bright rays of Jesus' resurrection life illumine the chamber of death,—because ministering spirits, who whisper peace and hope to the departing soul, are present. Such a one, who worshipped with us last year in this place, and who has lately been called to his reward, said, when he was asked how he felt? "I see inconceivable delight before me." And a dear friend of mine—a few minutes before he breathed his last, said —"Now glory is breaking in upon my soul."

Is not such a death-bed a speaking proof of the power, the life, the truth of Christ?—when we hear the departing believing friend, in the solemn moment when his heart and strength do fail, give expression to his firm unshaken hope in Christ? This hope is indeed a sure and stedfast path and plank to convey him across the dread vale of death,

"O glorious hour, O blest abode,
I shall be near and like my God,
And flesh and sin no more controul
The sacred pleasures of my soul.

My flesh shall slumber in the ground
Till the last trumpet's joyful sound,
Then burst the chains with sweet surprise
And in my Saviour's image rise!"

Let me, in conclusion, remind the unconverted and careless ones, that *two resurrections* are mentioned in Scripture—"the resurrection of the *dead*" and "the resurrection from the dead." Thus in that most striking passage, in Daniel xii. 2:—"Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." The latter are they on the left hand, to whom the Son of Man shall say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels!"—and this is the second death.—These are they who seek their portion in this life; who want no Saviour, no atonement, no grace. Spiritual death is their element here. With no spark of life, they go, when all is over, into their original element, the kingdom of darkness. Who is so blind as willingly, deliberately to encounter this final doom?

Let us pray that the resurrection life of Christ may pervade and sanctify our spiritual and mortal parts, and that sin and death may be put down by the Prince of life. If sin has become to us exceedingly sinful; this new life, derived from the Lord's resurrection, will be to us a precious gift.

THE DISCIPLES GOING TO EMMAUS.

Luke xxiv. 13, 14.

And behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

THE history of Christ's Resurrection contains many interesting incidents. These are truly edifying, and they lead us to a right understanding of his divine work and character. We also see in them the ways of God with his people clearly pointed out,—ways which generally lead from darkness to light, from a night of sorrow and weeping to a morning of joy.

The interesting history before us shows in particular, how the people of God, under his teaching, attain to a clearer knowledge of divine truth.

We do not know what took place on the glorious morning of Christ's resurrection in the region of spirits. Doubtless there was a great festival day in heaven; when the everlasting gates were opened once more for the ransomed of the Lord to enter! when the Conqueror of Satan and death returned, sprinkled with blood. I say, we know little or nothing of what was transacted in the Father's house; for it is not recorded. We shall hear more of it when we shall have reached the place. But from what is recorded in the valuable sketches of the Evangelists, it appears,

that our Saviour's chief occupation on that memorable day was to show Himself to his disciples;—here to one—there to another. How kindly and cheeringly he spoke to them!—all with the gracious view to quicken that which was ready to die,—to re-kindle the flame which was nearly extinguished,—to inspire the band of desponding disciples with new life,—to rejoice their drooping hearts. Just what might have been expected of Him, who from love to his people had laid down his life.

Their eyes were opened to see in the history of their Lord, a new motive and a new fact, which they had not clearly understood before. The scenes of past sorrow had softened their hearts; and now their gross secular views were brushed away by the radiant light of a new day. They saw now with enlightened eyes, that there was a great momentous reason why Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory.

Let us in spirit accompany the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, and witness how the risen Lord met the mournful travellers, and how he instructed them and made himself known unto them in breaking of bread.

We know very little of the two individuals who are here introduced to our notice; for the Evangelist only mentions that the name of one of them was Cleophas. But one thing we know;—that they were sincere disciples of our Lord: and the conversation which is here related, sufficiently proves, that they took a most lively interest in the sufferings and death

of Christ, and regarded the late events as a very great misfortune. Perhaps it was with a view to seek some relief for their sorrowful hearts, that those pious men agreed to take a walk together to the neighbouring village of Emmaus.

When the mind is bowed down with grief, a sight of the beauties of creation, and moving about in the scenes of nature, has a soothing effect upon the feelings,—and the environs of Jerusalem presented scenes of this description, in every direction.

The conversation of the disciples, as might be expected, turned upon the unexpected and astonishing events which, humanly speaking, had destroyed their hopes of better days to come;—their comfort, happiness and joy. Their prospects of a bright future had all been centred in Jesus; and He was condemned to death. His murder was as a sword piercing their souls, and destroyed the foundation of their hope.

They were "talking together of all these things;" for when tribulation is coming in like a flood, it affords some relief, if two fellow-sufferers can mutually unburden their hearts to each other. Sympathy, and particularly sanctified sympathy, is a precious gift; and when two of kindred feelings and affections thus commune with each other, they are sure to find some support. Some fountain will open before them, from which they can draw water for their refreshment. When Hagar in the desert lifted up her voice and wept, seeing her child ready to perish from thirst, God appeared to convince her that she was not alone

—"And God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water."

Thus did the Lord in the present instance appear for his people. While they communed together and reasoned, a stranger joined them; and this unknown one appeared to take a lively interest in the subject on which they were conversing. This stranger was no one else but the Lord himself; but it is said, "their eyes were holden, that they should not know him." The very man, in whom their thoughts and affections and desires were so thoroughly wrapt up, was, though unknown, then present with them.

How did he come to appear beside them all of a sudden? How did he come to be in the midst of the eleven that very evening, when the doors were shut? We cannot account for it. We only know this—that our glorified Lord, enshrined in a glorified body, is no longer affected by the laws of this lower world. But the cheering and practical inference we make from this meeting is, that Christ loves to appear where his own faithful people are;—where they speak of him;—where he is desired;—where holy affections are drawn out towards him. Yes, *there* he appears,—he makes himself felt. It is a gracious, a delightful feeling, and blessed moments these,—

"Where'er they seek Thee, thou art found,
And every place is hallow'd ground."—

Why is it that so few are favoured with his company? Why is it that such a treat is but rarely enjoyed by us? It is simply because He is not wanted; He

is not the desired of men. Where are those, who, like the two disciples, commune together and speak and reason in such a manner as would make it apparent, that Jesus is the chief object of their hope and joy?

He did not manifest himself at once to the two brethren; but instead of this, he communicated to them that which they stood in real need of. He gave them those instructions which removed their old carnal ideas and prejudices. He made them to understand the great plan of salvation by the death of the Son of God: and this is the greatest and most important lesson a man has to learn,—much more important than a personal sight of Christ.

Our Lord accordingly began to enquire, "What manner of communications are these, that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad?"—He thus desired to assure them of his cordial interest in their concerns. It was the first step towards gaining their confidence;—"I see you are in sorrow and sadness, and some event appears to have happened, which has much affected your feelings; will you open your hearts to one, who can sympathise with those who are in trouble?" He who has the key of David, succeeded at once in opening the door: for what can be pleasanter than to fall in on a journey with a stranger who proves a friend, possessed of kindred feelings! Nothing was better calculated to soothe the sadness of these true disciples and to divert their thoughts into a more pleasant channel.

Accordingly, one of them at once speaks out in the fulness of his heart,—"Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?" Is it not a well known fact? has not the whole city resounded with the dreadful story, from one end to the other? Have not the thousands of its inhabitants, and the myriads of visitors who have come to the paschal feast, been thrown into a state of the highest excitement?

The stranger still continued to enquire, "What things are these you speak of?" He desired to hear the story from their own lips: and more than this,—he was going to draw out what were their views respecting the character and the kingdom of Christ. Nothing can be more desirable and nothing more profitable than for people to speak out what is in their minds on these subjects, for by so doing they become more fully conscious of what is their faith and what is their hope, and what ideas they entertain concerning the kingdom of God. The disciples replied, "We speak concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people; and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him;—but we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel." The historical facts are here set forth with beautiful simplicity. At the same time, we can see how defective were the ideas of the disciples concerning the

real character of Christ. They considered him a prophet sent by God, with the powerful credentials of working miracles. Probably they considered him superior to the old prophets; yet they had no clear perception of his *Divinity*: and as to his work,—the commission he had to execute,—*there* they were at fault still more: "They trusted that He should have redeemed Israel;" that is, they expected he should have delivered the Jews from the Roman yoke, from tyrannical governors, and restored the kingdom of Israel to its ancient splendour, to the glory which it possessed in the days of David and Solomon. This was more or less the idea of all the disciples. They looked forward to the establishment of a secular monarchy, with Christ sitting on the throne; in which religion and virtue should flourish, and Israel be restored to the enjoyment of earthly happiness and political superiority:—and in this sense they explained the prophecies of old.

Their minds being prepossessed with this favourite thought, which in substance was cherished by the whole nation, it is not surprising that on the death of CHRIST, the disciples began to despair of seeing their hopes realised. As to the probability or possibility of the resurrection of their Lord, we do not discover one trace that any of them entertained any hope. Some of them indeed went to visit the grave early in the morning; but it was with a view of embalming or anointing the dead body, that they went with their spices.

The time for removing the veil from their hearts had now come. The Lord said unto them; "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" He gave them a faithful rebuke, that they did not know better,—that their faith and their spiritual perceptions were still so beclouded and feeble, notwithstanding the distinguished privileges they had enjoyed by His presence and teaching for so long a time. "You consider that which was done with your expected Deliverer,—His sufferings and death,—as a calamity,—an irretrievable loss,—a fatal blow inflicted upon the kingdom that was to be established. Now come and open your eyes, and behold this great event in the light of the prophecies. It was absolutely necessary for Messiah to suffer and die. It was in harmony with a Divine plan, clearly laid down in the prophets. Israel could not be redeemed, and the salvation of the world could not be accomplished, without it. You judge a carnal judgment; but that which is hopeless death in your ideas, is fraught both with life and hope, when judged by the word and promises of God."

How the disciples must have been surprised in listening to the interesting stranger! and as they went on listening, what a change must have been wrought in their minds! It was like a dark wintry scene changing by a sudden transition into the lovely verdure of a smiling landscape in a spring morning.

And then he states moreover, that it was necessary

for Christ to "enter into his glory!" By this reflection he prepared their hearts for a more joyful scene, —the reality of His own resurrection,—which had indeed been announced to them by the women, but to which they had given no credence, and were inclined to look upon it as an idle tale. Our Saviour had a great work to transact above. He had to enter heaven with his blood, as the price of man's redemption. He is now transacting a great work there. He reigns as King, and he continues to be the High Priest and Intercessor of his people. Oh, it is a sweet truth to know—that we have a Friend in heaven, who from thence directs all the affairs and concerns of his people with unerring wisdom, and that He loves them with more than a parent's love!

The disciples were exactly the same feeble, doubting, forgetful beings as we are. Though they had known and seen and heard a good deal of Christ, still their knowledge of him, as well as their faith, was as yet very defective. They had not learned half as much during past days, as they might have learned, had they been more attentive, and had they stored up his word in their hearts. And have we not reason to reproach ourselves for our unbelief and hardness of heart? Do not many act like fools in neglecting religion, and allow their affections to be engrossed by this world?

At the best, how often have we neglected our Bible, and how little do we actually know of its contents? How many wrong notions do we take up? How many

foolish prejudices do we foster against what God has given for the good of man? And regarding this very point, this fundamental point of Christianity, concerning which our Saviour here enlightened his disciples; how little is known by Christians practically! The death and resurrection of Christ foretold by prophets, and presented in its accomplishment in the gospel!—Oh, what a study—what a plan—what love, wisdom and justice are here!

Because the disciples did not understand, the Lord now became their Teacher:—"Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." This was an exposition worth hearing! Doubtless it became clear to them from that discourse, that the Bible as a whole, contains an incontrovertible, imperishable testimony for CHRIST. The first part of it foretold and foreshadowed Messiah to come: as the second part of it exhibits Messiah as having really come and accomplished man's redemption. Probably the Lord commenced by explaining the first promise given to Adam after the fall in Paradise—how the Seed of the woman had now bruised the serpent's head; and how the serpent had bruised his heel! Probably he dwelt on the words of Moses;—"A prophet shall the Lord God raise up among your brethren, like unto me; and him shall ye hear." Perhaps he dwelt upon the Messianic Psalms and the striking sublime descriptions of Isaiah concerning Messiah's sufferings and death and resurrection.

These lessons were not forgotten by the disciples. They were communicated to the other brethren: and what had fallen from the lips of the glorified Teacher on that walk to Emmaus, was turned by reflection into heavenly food—and reproduced in the Apostles' preaching at the day of Pentecost and afterwards; when they demonstrated before their brethren from the Old Testament, the truth and necessity and result of Messiah's death and resurrection!

Does the wish arise?—"Oh that I had been a fellow-traveller with the company on the way to Emmaus! Oh that I had been favoured to listen to such an expositor of the prophetic word!" Well, my dear hearer, you have the same good lot,—the same opportunity. Take your Bible; read it more frequently; compare the prophetic word of the Old Testament with Christ's teaching, and the story of his life and death and resurrection; and you will get what those disciples obtained:—but you must listen in their teachable spirit.

And now the little company had reached the place whither they went: and as they drew nigh unto the village; the stranger who had entertained them in so delightful and profitable manner, seemed ready to take His leave. But Cleopas and his companion had no wish for this. It appeared to them much too soon to part. They therefore made an effort to keep him a little longer. They entreated—and it is said they "constrained him" to stop: "Abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent."

Such a companion they felt, was not to be found every day. Their affections were intensely drawn out towards Him. A fire was kindled in their hearts. I feel persuaded after the lessons they had listened to, they began to anticipate that He must either be some heaven-sent messenger, or possibly he might even be the Lord himself. At any rate they felt an irresistible desire to be in his society as long as possible. I feel persuaded this was the working of His grace in their hearts. When the affections are drawn towards Jesus, his Spirit is at work within: and under his good influence, nothing else will satisfy the soul—no, nothing—but CHRIST:—"Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

What a suitable and emphatic prayer is presented to us here,—"*Abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent!*"—emphatic,—because it came from hearts enraptured with the presence and glory of Christ. Ah, brethren, young people generally think not and care not: but the older we get, and the nearer we draw towards the evening of life—the more we must feel the need of such a Friend, such a Companion, such a Teacher as CHRIST. Let me assure you, he who does not thus feel, and prefers other company—is far—far out of the right way! He will find it so, when the evening is spent, and the night,—the dark dreary night—comes on. Oh, if you have a heart to pray, repeat this beautiful prayer to-night,—"Abide with us—abide with me—with my family—with my children—Lord Jesus! abide

in my house and heart,—for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent."

The Lord gave his consent. He went in to tarry with them. They partook of a friendly meal together. How pleasant must it have been at such a table, after such a journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus! The very thought of it does one's heart good. In such society believers can, as it is said of the Christians in the Apostles' days, "break bread, and eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." After such an entertainment, one goes to rest in peace; and not with a conscience soiled and burdened, and a heart estranged from God; as the children of the world must feel when the gay banquet is over.

And it came to pass as He sat at meat with them, He took bread and blessed it, and brake and gave to them. And while partaking of the sanctified food, their eyes were opened. The disciples recognised their Lord; and he vanished out of their sight. This was an end quite in harmony with the beginning. As a historical sketch the account is perfect, and worthy of the theme. The Lord afforded the disciples so much of his presence and such a full sight of himself, as was desirable to convince them of the reality of his resurrection, and to confirm their faith;—but he broke off and suddenly disappeared, when that object was accomplished. They had quite sufficient evidence, and were satisfied. They had learned their lesson well this time. They had learned more of Christ and his kingdom on that little journey, and had seen

more of Him during the short moment in which he broke the bread, than they had learned or seen for years before. And the reason was, because his words entered their souls with a quickening power. It was a Divine effectual teaching, which conveyed light and kindled the spirit of love in their hearts. And this is what we all need, my brethren. All our reading and learning and meditating, is of very little practical use, unless God open the heart by His Spirit, and teach us inwardly. Religion has much to do with the understanding; but I am convinced it has much more to do with our affections. I have met with numbers of intelligent heathens, whose judgment was convinced of the truth and excellency of the Gospel, yet they remain in their old ways to this day. And the same is the case with baptized heathens,—people who know every thing, and can carry on a religious conversation, and approve what is good;—yet have not the one thing needful:—their affections are upon the world. Let the heart once be arrested and engaged by Christ; and the understanding will follow as a matter of course. In the present instance, both faculties were affected and drawn under Divine influence at once. While the Lord expounded to them the word of prophecy, they saw clearly and a fire was kindled within.

Let not this interesting scene pass from your minds unimproved. Let us pray that the contemplation of our Lord's resurrection may leave one beneficial effect at least. Let it be this,—that we resolve in

his presence to give a more careful attention to the word of God. Luther said, "The Bible is like a fruit-bearing tree: I never go into the garden and shake one branch after another, but I gather some fresh fruit from this tree of life."

The interesting meeting on the way to Emmaus, is recorded as an important practical part of the history of the resurrection. Christ is still appearing on earth; "Behold," He says, "I am with you always, even to the end of the world." It is a great thing to get a realising view of his presence. Our low earthly desires,—our grovelling craving lusts,—will suffer a powerful check;—our folly and apathy to Divine things will wear off,—if we realise His presence with us. How many a wayward and wayworn wanderer has been met by him, since that memorable evening at Emmaus! How many an enemy of the cross of Christ—how many an infidel and blasphemer has been met by him—like Saul on his way to Damascus—and has been struck down to the ground by the heavenly light! Perhaps some of you may remember the conversion of that eminent Christian, Col. Gardiner. He was on his way to a sinful appointment: but he could not proceed. It was the Lord that met him. He returned home, and began that very night to read the Bible. Whether it was from highly excited feeling, or whether it was a vision, is not known; but he thought he saw the Lord Jesus extended on the cross. The sight left an indelible impression on his mind: and he became

from that night a devout and consistent follower of the crucified and risen Saviour.

The Lord meets his people in different ways, direct and indirect. How often does He send some one in His place,—a faithful pious friend—to speak a word in season! or a letter which contains some single sentence that fixes itself upon the heart; or a word heard in the house of God and proving like a nail fastened in a sure place, driven home by the hammer of the Master! Oh, how various are the paths and ways by which Jesus visits sinners! Happy the man and blessed of God, who opens his eyes and is ready to hear! "Therefore, to-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness."

ETERNAL REDEMPTION OBTAINED BY CHRIST.

Heb. ix. 11, 12.

But CHRIST *being come an High priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the Holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*

CHRIST hath obtained an eternal redemption for us. In these few words the purpose and the end of Christ's sufferings and death are presented to us. The redemption of mankind was the great object for which the eternal Son of God condescended to clothe himself in our human nature, and to become in all things like unto his brethren. Eternal redemption is therefore the main subject on which the Gospel dwells; the centre in which all other divine truths meet. And hence these words—"Having obtained eternal redemption for us,"—embody the glad message, which is to be proclaimed in the world to the end of time. Our highest interests are bound up in it; and hence it remains for us who wish to have a share in the blessing, that we receive it in that spirit of love and gratitude, which the greatness of the gift requires.

The mind of the Christian who has tasted of the

excellency of it, and enjoyed its power, is a living witness of this salvation.

Redemption is a solemn subject, Christian hearers; when we dwell upon it at a season like the present, when we are called upon to remember the sufferings and death of the Son of God. I need hardly remind you that we should give our full attention to it,—not pass it over superficially. To receive divine truth in general requires preparedness of the heart: but if we wish to enter fully upon the most glorious part of the gospel, there ought to be for once the undivided heart, the devotional feeling given up to it.

It is the Spirit who can apply it to the inward heart. Let us pray that He may visit us now with his life-giving power, and enable us rightly to comprehend and fully to appreciate the great truth—Christ has obtained eternal redemption for us. Let me direct your attention:

I. To this redemption as accomplished by Christ.

II. As it is imparted to individual believers.

I. In regard to the accomplishment of this work, the Apostle states,—"By his own blood he entered into the Holy place." Christ is presented to us here in his sacerdotal character, as the great High priest. This Epistle to the Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians. The Apostle addressed those who were familiarly acquainted with the temple services, the sacrifices, washings and offerings. There was one

particularly interesting ceremony celebrated once a year. At the feast of the Atonement, the high priest entered the holy of holies with the blood of the animal which had been offered upon the altar. And with this blood he sprinkled the mercy seat. The pious Israelite was taught to believe that without shedding of blood there was no remission of sin; and he was taught too, that these ceremonies had a typical character, and were instituted to put him in mind that God in mercy was going to provide a Saviour, a paschal Lamb, which in reality was to take away the sins of the world. When the Israelite, in addition to these significant sacrificial ceremonies, read some of the Messianic Psalms or prophecies, which foretold the advent and death and work of Messiah, such as the beautiful chapter LIII. of Isaiah, surely his hopeful expectations would be aroused, his heart would bound for joy, in thinking that the longed-for day of salvation was at hand. It was a wise and judicious plan in the first preaching of the Apostles, to present the message of the Gospel to their brethren in the flesh, as intimately connected with the religious ceremonies with which their minds were associated by habit from time immemorial. The Spirit taught them so to do. The redemption by Christ was nothing less than a development of a glorious plan, which the fathers of old were permitted to see only in undefined outlines.

Now, my brethren, the teaching of the Apostle in my text is this, that the blood-shedding and death of Christ were a ransom for our transgressions, a price paid

in full for our debts. "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Mat. xxii. 28.) It was a work which the purest, noblest character among men could never have ventured to undertake: yea, such an idea never entered into the mind of an angelic being. None of these can "by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." Psalm xlix. 7.

Heaven was shut up from fallen man; the loving-kindness of God was withdrawn; for man had rebelled, he had forfeited his birthright. The sentence pronounced in paradise in case of disobedience had taken effect: "The day that thou eatest of the fruit of this tree, thou shalt surely die." That by sin death has entered into the world, we know from the word of inspiration,—we are eye-witnesses to it. Take hold of thine arm. It is flesh: and flesh is subject to corruption. In the beginning it was not so; man was not created to die but to live for ever. And that the fallen sinner is under the divine displeasure, we likewise know. The revealed Word says so; and conscience, that faithful witness, seals the truth, sometimes in the most solemn awful manner.

Our fall! This is the reason why man has lost the friendship and approval of God; and left to himself, he is indeed in a deplorable condition. Vengeance belongeth unto God; "his wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." "There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." "God has con-

cluded all under unbelief." It is of no use therefore to classify, and talk of some among the many being good and virtuous characters. The best and most blameless man is still a fallen being, and a guilty sinner in the sight of God.

We want a Redeemer; and without an almighty one to rescue us, we must have been lost. Jesus Christ undertook to pay a ransom. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" "As in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive. As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Now therefore if any man sin; if he truly feels that he has sinned; if he comes with a contrite heart acknowledging it; let him know, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." What a gift, what an acquisition this is!—and not partial, not confined to a certain privileged class; but full, perfect, a common good for all sinners! The refined man of letters and the savage inhabitant of the forest, the prince on the throne and the beggar on the road, have an equal share in it.

"Let the Indian, let the Negro,
Let the rude barbarian see
That divine and glorious conquest,
Once obtained on Calvary."

On Calvary the ransom of the world has been signed with blood,—that blood which cleanseth from all sin; for "it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul." Lev. xvii. 11.

"Christ by his own blood entered into the holy of holies—having obtained eternal redemption for us." This is a beautiful and significant expression. The Son of God as our spiritual High Priest, after dying for the sins of the world, is represented as entering heaven with the precious purple of His own blood, the price of the sinner's ransom before his Father; saying, "Father, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do: here in my hands is the proof, and here is the price." And the ransom was accepted; and as such, received the full approval of the Father. The plan designed in the council of the Trinity was carried out and brought to perfection. By this blood-shedding the salvation of the world has been achieved!

When our first parents fell in paradise, three hostile elements are mentioned as having been the cause and effect of their fall,—*Satan*, *sin*, and *death*. Our great Conqueror has overcome these by shedding his blood: and his followers conquer them "by the blood of the Lamb, and the testimony of his word."

Sin is the root of all evil, and of all suffering. Its first commission opened the flood-gate to all the misery that has since deluged the earth. All the wasting wars and strifes which have desolated empires and devoured the human family by millions, originated in Satanic pride and ambition. The scourges of plague

and cholera, and a variety of diseases which Divine Providence has in every age employed for chastising nations and families, are represented as visitations for particular national sins and forgetfulness of God. Is there no remedy to stem at last this fearful torrent of evil and consequent suffering? Ah, brethren, the world would long since have shared the fate of Sodom and Gomorrha, if God had not provided and applied an effectual remedy for the healing of the nations. I recognise this universal remedy in the blood of the Lamb of God! It crieth not for vengeance but for mercy. Let a people, or town, or family turn to Jesus and pray to him; believing in Him, the crucified; and sin's deadly power will be destroyed and divine judgments averted. Such a people will become a righteous and a holy people.

As to Satan, the old serpent, the first liar, the great murderer from the beginning; his doom is sealed. A believer in Christ need not fear him: he only reigns where ignorance, superstition, unbelief and infidelity are prevailing. Christ came to destroy the works of the devil: "By death he destroyed him who had the power of death." When sin is forgiven and grace dwells in a believer's heart, the power of the usurper is at an end. And if the accuser of the brethren should prefer charges against them, they can boldly appeal to that blood of reconciliation. Let any one under deep conviction bring forward this plea, this practical argument;—"Satan, you may accuse me of a

thousand sins: I know I am a great sinner: but Christ shed his precious blood for me: I hide myself in his wounded side, his pierced heart—I look for my pardon and justification to the ransom paid." Before that plea, he cannot stand—he will flee away.

Once more—*Death* is a hostile element; and it must be confessed, an awful one. It has two aspects: it has laid hold with fearful grasp of man's body and soul. There is temporal death, and there is eternal death.

But here also Christ has overcome. His redeeming Blood,—the ransom with which he entered the Holy of holies,—is an all-sufficient remedy to remove its terrors; yea, to annihilate its power. Redemption includes among other blessings, deliverance from death. It is the sovereign remedy for the health and restoration of this mortal body and of the immortal spirit. It includes the gift of eternal life.

For the Apostle expressly states, that "Christ has obtained *eternal* redemption for us." The Israelites in their temple services had only the shadow of the thing. The sacrifices and the sprinkling of blood had to be constantly repeated. The high priest had to enter year by year into the holy of holies with blood; and it is clearly stated, it "could not make him perfect" who did the service.

But our great High Priest paid a ransom which has need of no repetition: it will possess its value for ever: it will bring us to heaven. That memorable act which was accomplished when he cried, "It is finished,"

will bear its blessed fruits in all ages of the world's duration.

> "Let the Redeemer's name be sung,
> In every land by every tongue."

Redemption will retain its power and brightness to the end of time: and the last sinner converted, will enjoy its blessings in as full a measure as the thief on the cross, at the moment when the covenant of salvation was confirmed by the death of the Son of God.

Thousands are witnesses at this very day that the effects of Jesus' grace are still the same; productive of the same satisfactory results, as in the days of the Apostles. It imparts to the penitent new life; it changes his mind and disposition; it purifies his conscience and prepares him for heaven. Our blessed Redeemer in his character of eternal High Priest ever liveth and intercedeth for us. He will never grow weary of his office,—to save all who come to him by faith.

This redemption is "*eternal*" likewise, inasmuch as it possesses, to him who has become partaker of it, an eternal value. So long as we abide in Him, nothing can move our souls, or disturb our peace. Our garments, when once washed in the blood of the Lamb, will not wear out, but remain pure and holy, till we appear in them before his throne. They who live in his communion, possess the happy privilege to have their conversation in this world with a pure conscience.

A Saviour's grace will keep their soul in peace, till they are transported from the trials of faith to the glorious scenes of sight in heaven.

II. *This Redemption as imparted to individual believers.*—How are we to become truly interested in this redemption? It was a serious question which St. Paul put to his brethren at Rome. After exhibiting the doctrine of justification by grace in the clearest light; he asks;—"Shall we therefore continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid! How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" If we have once become sensible of the favour of God, we cannot remain in any wilful transgression, nor make Christ's redemption a cover to hide sin. A treasure so precious as this, cannot be received but in hearts duly prepared. A thorough acquaintance with our real state by nature, in its desperate wickedness and deceitfulness, as the Prophet Jeremiah describes it, (Jer. xvii. 9,) and a hearty grief and sorrow on account of our past sins—this is the first beginning of conversion; by this the fallow ground of our hearts, rendered obdurate by sin, is ploughed up and softened.

My brethren, if that beginning is not made, the redemption of Christ can never be rightly understood or duly appreciated. If you feel no concern about your real state before God, if you can trifle with sin, you will at the same time make light of the atonement of Christ: for then it has no interest to you. If you comfort yourselves with an unblemished life, and soothe your conscience with your own works, or other

vile excuses, you can never apply to yourselves the delightful message, "CHRIST obtained eternal redemption;" for *you* hope in a redemption of your own. He is a Physician only for those who are sick, and not for those who think themselves well. But who can make this stony heart soft? Neither the thunders and curses of Sinai nor the sweet promises of the Gospel. It is the Spirit of God alone, that worketh effectually, who can give repentance, and work true faith in us. If he breathe life into our souls, we shall awake from our sleep: we shall fear and mourn with a godly sorrow. And then it is, that Jesus visits the contrite one with the comforting message, "Behold me! I am thy salvation. I have suffered, I have died for thee, poor sinner! The hand writing that was against thee is destroyed. I stood in thy place, and carried thy sorrows. Look on my pierced side, and see the prints of the nails in my hands; and believe. I have wrought out an eternal redemption for thee. My wounds and stripes bear witness, that I am thy Redeemer, and thou art my redeemed."

Thus by faith we behold the great sacrifice of the Lamb of God, and accept of his redemption. Thus his merits are applied to us. When all self-righteous delusions are given up, when we are weary of drinking of the polluted cisterns of this world, and thirst for the water of life,—then we receive a new and contrite heart; and in this new heart a treasure pure and incorruptible. It is Christ's salvation.

If we do really feel, what sin is in the sight of God;

the misery and anxiety and loss it has caused to our souls;—then we shall also truly acknowledge the excellency of that grace, which was so freely bestowed on us,—that eternal love and compassion, by which we were plucked as brands out of the fire, and which made us heirs of eternal glory.

Then our Redeemer will be no longer an indifferent object in our eyes; but the dearest object of our love. And thus the kingdom of God, which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, will be established within us on a sure foundation; and we can say with confidence, "I know that Jesus is my Redeemer and my Friend, for He has revealed himself to me in mercy and lovingkindness." And though we cannot on earth attain to that perfect holiness and liberty from sin, we ardently desire; yet sin has lost its dominion. As we were first governed by selfish motives and sinful passions, to our continual trouble and distress; so we do now feel the constraining power of Christ's love, to our satisfaction and peace. As we formerly delighted in sin; so do we now find the sweetest enjoyment in His service.

In this renewed state, our minds will become increasingly attached to heavenly things; and we can enter into the feelings of the Apostle when he said, "We have here no abiding city, but we seek one to come." It is impossible that he in whose heart the day-star of eternal life has risen, can any longer cleave to the things of this world, so as to lose sight of his glorious destiny, and to forget those good things

which are promised in heaven. Nothing can so attract his desires as the crown of life in the Father's house which is held out to the faithful conqueror;—when he is to enjoy in fullest measure the fruits of Christ's redemption.

Eternal redemption having been obtained for all, why, we would ask, do so few avail themselves of these rich bounties? How do any not believe these things with the full consent of the heart, as they deserve to be believed and to be enjoyed? It is because they cannot see the excellency of them. They may answer in Eve's words, "The serpent has beguiled me." But those very deluded ones generally do not believe there is such a dark, delusive power in existence. And others, who are not blind altogether, are yet not aware that their sight is but feeble and imperfect. Oh, how much do we need to pray, "Lord, open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law,"—my danger and my remedy.

Let us bring our desires into harmony with our spiritual wants. Then the stream of life will flow more freely among us. And if these desires are awakened; a retrospect upon those moments when grace was given us in fuller measure, will afford us unmixed delight, when nothing else can give satisfaction. With death itself in view, we can sing with David, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

Oh may these words sound in our ears, as a sweet

tune, in every time of need,—*eternal redemption!*—for you, for me, for suffering mankind, for every repenting and believing sinner!

If any here present be not sure of having an interest in it; allow me to say, the fault lies not on the side of God, but on your's. He is not sparing in his gifts, nor partial in lavishing them upon us. Come therefore "to-day:" receive the blessing of redemption in that way in which it is offered. Renounce and cast off, at the solemn remembrance of Christ's sufferings and agonies, the vain airy fancies of your virtues and worth; for in the sight of God you have none. Neither despair of life, when deep conviction calls forth your sorrow. Jesus does not regard your worthiness or unworthiness; but he regards your wants: and to satisfy them he presents HIMSELF to you. It is free grace by which he pardons and accepts the chief of sinners: and he has the power as well as the will, to continue, and finish His own work.

And for a last encouragement,—look at the end of a believer's course, when he has passed Jordan, and is entering the heavenly Canaan; as it is described by the Prophet:—"The redeemed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away." May that be the happy lot of all here present, in that great day, when the Lord will gather his elect from all the ends of the world; and when His redeemed shall stand in consummate perfection in the temple of God in the New Jerusalem!

CHRIST MADE WISDOM, RIGHTEOUSNESS, SANCTIFICATION AND REDEMPTION.

1 Cor. i. 30.

But of Him are ye in CHRIST JESUS, *who of* GOD *is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*

THE great design of the Gospel is the glory of God and the happiness of man;—to lead sinners to JESUS CHRIST; and to instruct those who have been brought to Him in the true knowledge of God, with a continual remembrance of the privileges and happiness they have in Him.

The Apostles in their writings all insist upon this great point; and Paul most frequently: but no where more fully than in the beautiful words of the text. The believer possesses a true life, and is in the true element of happiness, when united with God and subject entirely to his will. A contrary experience will bring opposite results. Let a man put *himself* or any other created thing in the place of God; and he is a lost, unhappy being. There is no greater impediment to the gospel's success in a sinner's heart than the disposition to exalt himself; and no sin is more deeply rooted in it; hence the great necessity of self-knowledge, watchfulness and prayer: hence the frequent exhortations to humility in the sight of God.

The Apostle was aware that a disposition had shown itself among his converted brethren at Corinth, to exalt the instruments of their conversion, instead of giving glory to God. Contentions, as a natural consequence, arose among them. One said, 'I am of Paul;' another, 'I am of Apollos;' and a third, 'I am of Cephas.' He therefore directed them to the fountain; by declaring it was neither Paul nor Apollos, nor any other Apostle by whom they had been saved, and regenerated to a new life; but it was Christ crucified, whom he had preached unto them and in whom they had become believers.

A sober consideration of this Divine truth, that we owe all spiritual blessings to CHRIST, must convince us of the reasonableness of acknowledging and glorifying God for them; and that to ascribe any thing to man is a proof of ignorance in spiritual things. Oh, could we see with the eyes of faith an open heaven, and the riches of Divine blessings ready to be poured out upon us so freely;—could we recognise in the blessings we have already received the heart and the hand of a kind loving Father in Jesus Christ;—how ardently should we then love this Father,—with what childlike dispositions should we then ask for and expect every needful blessing from him, and with what a deep sense of gratitude thank him for it! With these enlightened views we should esteem it our highest privilege to live more entirely to his glory.

"Ye are of Him," said the Apostle to his brethren.

This declaration must be taken in the highest, most eminent sense. Every creature is "of God:" but man even in his first creation,—for the dignity of his being and his high destination,—was accounted to be "of Him" in a peculiar manner; formed after His own likeness; and therefore called "the son of God."

But in an especial sense are believers of the New Covenant to be considered the workmanship of God. They are God's children and partakers of the Divine nature in CHRIST; so firmly united with him, that no power can separate them. He is the eternal WORD by which all things were made and still subsist; and our life which we derive from God, is through Him. This union of the Christian with his God in Christ is to him a depth of rich, inexhaustible consolation; although a man of worldly disposition cannot understand it. The glorious promises held out to the Christian, raise his spirit above the world, and lead his mind to aspire after nobler blessings than it can afford. He feels a holy ambition to have his conversation worthy of the gospel of Christ; to live like him whose meat and drink it was to do his Father's will. My hearers, if you are thus "of God," if you possess the power of a Divine life, the principle of the new creation within you; then let it come into operation, and strive to imitate your Divine pattern in all things. And to encourage you in the prosecution of this, I will now direct you to those unfailing supplies from which the feeblest believer receives grace after grace.

Our text presents CHRIST as the glory of a believer, under the following heads:—

I. A SOURCE OF WISDOM FOR HIS IGNORANCE.

II. THE AUTHOR OF RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR HIS GUILT.

III. A SANCTIFIER FOR HIS CORRUPTIONS.

IV. A REDEEMER FOR HIS STATE OF BONDAGE.

1. St. Paul states that CHRIST *is made unto us wisdom.* And here I may observe that the graces which a believer needs for his regeneration and final glorification are here represented as identified with Christ. The apostle not merely says, "He gives wisdom;" but HE *has been made unto us wisdom.* He is wisdom for us; a most encouraging declaration, affording the sweet conviction that if we receive him as our portion, we have all we want; we are enriched with a fulness of heavenly blessings. The wisdom then here mentioned, is a Divine gift; far different from that prudent discretion by which the children of this world manage their affairs and turn things to their advantage. Christ by the wisdom he imparts, enables us to know *God* and *ourselves* aright. These two points are indispensably necessary for our salvation. And what created being can reach the throne of Majesty in heaven, and describe the Almighty's being or declare his will? Only He who from eternity was with the Father, could convey such a revelation to the children of man. Or who among men can search out the depths of the human heart,

and give a correct description of what is harboured there, and how it is constituted? This likewise could only be done by Him who made that heart—who knew what was in man, and is acquainted with our thoughts afar of.

The heathen, being without revelation, have no true knowledge of the character and will of God. To the Jews were committed the Oracles of God for a season, until the appearance of the promised Saviour. But the Israelite in general knew his JEHOVAH only as a holy and jealous God; and it was with feelings of awful reverence that he approached the sanctuary with his atoning sacrifice: "*The Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by* JESUS CHRIST." By Him we are taught to address God as our Father. "Behold," says his beloved disciple, "what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

Nothing is so much calculated to fill our hearts not only with holy fear but filial love, as a true knowledge of God as revealed in Christ, and as he is set before us in his Word. Let us consider Him often as thus made known; and reflect on all He has prepared for His people. This is to them a constant theme of gratitude and joy.

Further, Christ is made unto us "wisdom" by leading us to a *thorough self-knowledge.* Sin is a most intimate companion of ignorance. A creature separated from his Creator is dark, being cut off from the Source of light. It is no easy matter to bring a sinful

being to a conviction of this, and to show him his unhappy condition; yea, it is altogether beyond the reach of human wisdom to produce this feeling of a conviction of sin. How ignorant are those of themselves, who think, that with all their defects, they have good hearts!—so ignorant,—that although acquainted with the contents of their Bible, they can grossly contradict the record of God concerning them;—"The heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." How ignorant are they of the dreadful effects of sin, who can trifle with it as light and insignificant, without considering what it has done, what misery it has brought on men and upon the Son of God himself! O brethren, did we truly reflect that those who are thus dead in their sins, will reap *eternal death* as the wages of it;—that the fire of hell is kindled in this life already in that conscience which is not washed in the blood of Christ;—how interesting, how important should we then find it to study the disposition and history of the human heart. Then we should also feel our need of Christ in a more lively manner, by whose enlightening grace alone we can know ourselves as we ought, and become wise unto salvation. How little do we know of our own hearts, even after we have been led to pray for divine wisdom! Daily do we discover new marks of our blindness and poverty. Therefore we stand so much in need of praying, that the eyes of our understanding may be enlightened and our hearts affected in a spiritual manner. This we want, because we live in a

world that lieth in wickedness, and are exposed to sin till our passage through it is accomplished. And here we can tell each other with gratitude, that full provision is made. Christ is our Wisdom. He Himself said, *I am the Light of the world.* Oh, let us receive the divine Teacher; and walk in his light. It will lead us to happiness and glory.

II. *The Author of righteousness for the believer's guilt.* We are not only ignorant, we are also *guilty creatures;* and to help us in this distressing emergency, Christ has become *our Righteousness.* Whatever our character in the eyes of man may be, the Apostle's declaration applies to the whole human race, *All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.* We have been disobedient to his law, and opposed the motions of his Holy Spirit. We have paid more attention to the body than to the soul,—more to time than to eternity. It is of no use to compare ourselves with others; and endeavour to find out some good qualities in which we excel them: these will not cover our unrighteousness. With a few fancied virtues we cannot pay a ransom for our numberless transgressions. Our guilt will remain, and bear heavily upon the soul; for God is a righteous Judge, and his law is a holy and righteous law. Let this law be the measure by which our worth is determined; and we shall be obliged to bow down and plead guilty. Thus *every mouth will be stopped and the whole world become guilty before God.* Here therefore, on another view, arises our need of Christ.

We must have a Surety; one perfectly holy and righteous, to stand in our place,—to be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. This is love divine,—that God himself,—the Judge and the party offended, —provides a ransom for the offender. The Father appointed his own SON to be *our Righteousness. The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all.* "He was afflicted and wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed." Our sins were all laid upon him. His obedience,—His righteousness is put upon us. In this way we become as if we had never sinned. We are free from condemnation, as if we were without spot and blemish. How affectionately does the Lord now plead with his people, and invite them to Him!—"Come now, and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, yet they shall be white as snow: though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool." Oh, what a precious promise to a heart bowed down by its guilt! Happy are we, if this righteousness of Christ is transferred to us,—if this precious provision becomes the subject of our songs in the house of our pilgrimage.

"O Saviour, Refuge, Hiding place,
My sins are cancelled all by thee!
Covered is my unrighteousness:
From condemnation I am free:
Thy blood divine, through earth and skies,
Mercy, free boundless mercy, cries."

Being thus clothed and enriched, we may lift up our faces with gladness before God; whereas the self-righteous shall be covered with shame, and confounded in his folly.

III. *A Sanctifier for the believer's corruptions.* There is something sublime in the manner in which the Apostle marks the work of Christ with his people. First he imparts wisdom. The light of divine knowledge enters the soul, which then perceives nothing but pollution and wretchedness. Next he covers it with the robe of righteousness. But the work is not yet complete. Sin must not only be forgiven, but the power of it must be removed. We must be assimilated to Christ. The bride of the Lamb must be made glorious within. And in this point also He is an all-sufficient Saviour and Friend. As he has become Christ *for* us, so he will become Christ *in* us. He is made unto us Sanctification. Thus he says in his intercessory prayer, "I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth."

This blessed operation begins in a sinner's repentance. From that time he is considered washed, separated from his sins. He is *accepted in the Beloved*, and a fit member for his eternal kingdom. But Christ is our sanctification, not only in so far as we are considered sanctified in him by his atoning blood,—He becomes our sanctification *effectively*, by sending his Holy Spirit into our hearts, working within us those things which can never be accomplished by our own application. He changes our carnal minds into

spiritual dispositions, and makes new creatures of us. Whatever a person may do by his own endeavours towards a change and improvement of the mind; you may depend upon it, the creation of a heavenly mind is the exclusive work of Divine grace. We may forsake sinful habits and assume quite a new character before the world: we may imitate religion, and put on the form of godliness: but inward purity, holiness and the grace of the Spirit are inimitable by nature's efforts. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh*, and to be carnally minded is spiritual death. Christ only communicates the breath of eternal life. How deeply should we feel our need of Christ to cleanse us, when we discover every day afresh the workings of the old man, as it is shown in pride, envy, hatred, uncharitableness, unbelief, discontent, impatience, impurity, sloth and sensuality of every kind. If still subject to these enemies, there is reason enough for us to cry out, *Behold I am vile!*—reason enough for our sighs and prayer—that Jesus, the conqueror of sin and death, may rouse us up from our slumber, and enable us to live a life of holiness and humility. Have we not every encouragement to ask and expect such a help, by which we may eventually become victorious, and tread Satan under our feet? Oh, yes! CHRIST is appointed to accomplish this very thing; and He has promised to send the Comforter and Sanctifier into our hearts, to form and renew us after the divine image. To our view it would indeed often appear impossible, that vessels of wrath by nature, can become vessels of mercy; that

hearts so base, so dead, so polluted, so wayward, can be softened, purified, sanctified, and transformed into temples of the living God; and there are moments in the believer's course, when dark clouds cover the mercy-seat, and he feels as if his prayers could not penetrate through them. Then he is ready to despond and to say, "Is it possible that such a sinner can eventually get to heaven?" The true source of comfort in such and similar cases, is to remember, that Christ is ever the same; and that he, as an all-sufficient, almighty Friend, can and will accomplish the work which human hands never could. By *grace* we shall overcome. Grace is made effectual in all who look to JESUS and to Him alone, for every blessing. We are dearer to him than we can believe. We are in constant remembrance with Him. And when we feel our weakness and corruption most, his power to sanctify and save us is most eminently exercised.

IV. *A Redeemer for the believer's state of bondage.* The last and crowning mercy of Christ is, his having been *made our Redemption.* The Apostle has said, "*We that are in this tabernacle, do groan being burdened.*" A deep sense of sin, with the infirmities and sufferings attending it, will accompany the traveller on Zion's ways to the end of his journey, until he is permitted to lay down his pilgrim's staff; and angels disrobe him of his pilgrim's garment. He longs for the happy day, when he shall be free from sin and free from sorrow; and his daily prayer is "Deliver us, O Lord, from all evil." Sweet to him

therefore is the truth, that Christ will do a complete work for him; that he has been brought to repentance, justified and sanctified by His grace, with this most glorious end in view;—that he may ultimately be fitted to join the redeemed of the Lord who surround His throne and dwell in His temple for ever. Yes! my hearers, sanctification will at last be perfected in our complete redemption. We shall not always have to mourn over our fall. We shall not for ever grieve over our unprofitableness. We shall not continue to be burdened under a sense of our infirmities, and to deplore our distance from God and want of spirituality. Our time of sowing in tears will soon be over. The day of harvest is approaching. If we have sown plentifully to the Spirit, we shall reap abundantly. We shall come with joy, and bring our sheaves with us. *In the world ye shall have tribulation*, said our Saviour, *but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.* Hence you perceive, that the state of a believer, little as he may appear to himself to differ from the careless, outwardly; is a far superior state. He has already an assurance of redemption; and in this he vastly differs from him who has no Redeemer. He possesses something within him, which raises him above his momentary trials;—which makes him happy and joyful. His father-land is in that heaven, where Jesus his Redeemer dwells. He has heard him say, *A little while, and I shall see you again.* Him whom he knows by faith, and of whose Spirit he has become a partaker, he shall see face

to face. The promise of *redemption* directs his eyes far beyond earthly scenes. It is a sweet sound, conveying to his anticipating mind, some idea of the things to be revealed,—which no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and which never entered into the heart of man.

To have such treasures in expectation; to be able to look forward to them in certain hope, at the hour when heart and flesh faileth, and when all earthly ties are going to be dissolved;—this is the privilege of the believer who has found and received Jesus as his *wisdom*, his *righteousness*, his *sanctification*, and his *redemption*. Heaven, the New Jerusalem, is his home. There he will find what he ardently longed after here below;—rest from toils, sin abolished, tears wiped away;—no more pains, no more sorrow. "*Behold, I make all things new.*" Freed from the annoyance and oppression of those who hate peace, he will find a holy society, suitable to the state of his mind, the company of perfected saints. "*The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads.*"

Having now shewn you, my dear hearers, what CHRIST is to the believing soul; how desirable, how suitable to all its necessities;—the important thing to be considered by way of application is, whether or not He has become such a Friend and such a Saviour to *your* souls? Put the simple question to yourselves, Do I know him personally, experimentally, in his glorious character, as *my* wisdom, *my* righteousness, *my*

Sanctifier, and *my* Redeemer? Blessings are here presented and promised of a heavenly nature,—those very blessings after which your immortal soul is hungering and thirsting. "What am I if I have no part in them? and what shall I be, if they are mine?—if Christ is mine and I am his?" It is very easy to ascertain the point. If you have received Christ as *wisdom*, then you fear and love your heavenly Father; you like to hear of him, to read his word; you embrace every opportunity to know more of him and his salvation; then you have mourned and wept over your sins; you humble yourselves daily in self-abasement and contrite feelings. If Christ has become your *righteousness*, then the peace of God dwells in your heart, you have a happy assurance that your sins are forgiven; you adore and admire that free grace, by which you have been pardoned and justified. And if He has become your *sanctification*, no sin will have dominion in you. The old man, with his lusts and desires, is mortified. You will pray and strive constantly to be holy as Christ is holy. It will be manifest that you are renewed. The world will bear testimony to the consistency of your character as Christians. Your friends, your acquaintances, your heathen servants will discover and acknowledge, that there is some reality in your religion—some likeness to Christ in you.

Then, ere long, Christ will be complete *redemption* to you. Even now, your life will be a course of preparation for his glorious appearance. One great thought,—*Jesus, heaven, glory*,—will pervade your mind. You

will have the pilgrim's disposition; and accordingly you will be content with a pilgrim's portion.

These appear to me the simple and clear evidences of a believer who is in Christ. They must appear more or less prominently in his feelings, in his life, in his whole character. May He dispose your hearts thus to receive him, and thus to abide in Him for ever.

THE CURSED MAN AND THE BLESSED MAN.

Jer. xvii. 5—8.

Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.

Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

When man had committed the first sin in Paradise, God pronounced a curse upon the ground for his sake; and because of that curse the whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain until now. On a subsequent occasion we read of a curse having been pronounced upon the first murderer, Cain, and with this dreadful punishment he went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod. We read, in the following pages of Bible history, of whole nations being destroyed, upon whom the divine

wrath descended—such as the Canaanites and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha.

On the other hand, we learn that there were persons, who became the particular favourites of the Almighty; —such as Abraham, "the friend of God;" whose descendants were destined to become the remarkable nation, with whom was established and preserved the knowledge and worship of the true God. As great and distinguishing as were their privileges; so aggravated was their guilt in casting off their trust in the God of their fathers. In the first verse of this chapter we read, how greatly God was displeased; and how vividly their sins were remembered against them. "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond; it is graven upon the tables of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars."

My brethren, such Divine denunciations as are contained in the text, apply to individuals as well as to nations. When God has revealed his mercy in Christ to us; when we possess his word, his ordinances and his appointed ministry; and, in these, far greater privileges than Israel had of old:—there rests upon us a solemn responsibility for the right use or the neglect and abuse of them. A righteous and holy God will not permit the gifts of his bounty to be abused, without taking notice of it, and visiting his unfaithful servants. We consider—

I. WHO IS THE CURSED MAN?

II. WHO IS THE BLESSED MAN?

I. *Who is the cursed man?* He is described in our text, and there is something very awful in this denunciation. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. To be under the wrath of the Almighty, doomed for destruction!—the very thought makes one tremble. The accursed under the old economy could not live; he was removed from the congregation and stoned. There are people who do not give this subject that earnest consideration which it demands. The careless and impenitent are often heard comforting themselves with the goodness and mercy of God; as if these were to supersede his righteousness and justice. The consistency of God's attributes allows no grace, no hope, no pardon to the unthinking, careless sinner.

What is the cause of the curse coming upon man? It is remarkable, that in the text there is no statement given of fearful crimes and sins, as provoking God's fiery indignation, as we find it described in Rev. xxii. 15.—"Without are dogs and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." The prophet on the other hand points out sins *of the heart*,—the internal workings of unbelief and pride:—"Cursed is the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm!" It is sinful, idolatrous reliance on the creature; with regard to man's support, safety, comfort and happiness, which is condemned. The Jews, in times of national danger, trusted in the Egyptians, because they were a wealthy

and powerful nation: whereas they should have gone to the sanctuary; confessed their sins, and pleaded for mercy and deliverance at the hand of Jehovah. What a grievous mistake they made! But so it is when the eyes of a nation or individuals are blinded by a worldly judgment, by secular views and objects. Then God is forgotten: and his Divine government, controuling and directing the affairs of man, is lost sight of. Then "the carpenter encourageth the goldsmith." Plans, conceived in ambition and selfishness, are worked out. Men feel sure of success, because such a combination of talents, wisdom and skill is employed. And what is the consequence?—The result is, that God withdraws his blessing. He seems to say,—"You do not consult me: you fancy I have no concern with your proceedings: you have made a huge idol, and placed it in the sanctuary which is my lawful property." Then what follows? Disappointment, and unhappiness. So it happened at the building of the tower of Babel. Pride and infidelity spoiled every thing; and the builders were dispersed. Yet the world will learn no lesson,—will not believe the word: and each in his own way, is building his own tower to his own confusion—for "cursed is the man that trusteth in man; and maketh flesh his arm." All flesh is as grass. The strongest arm will wither, and become helpless. Man is indeed a social being; and we all depend mutually upon each other for comfort and happiness: and what can render life more agreeable, than the mutual exchange of kindness and bene-

volence. But beware lest you put a creature in the place of God. The first great command is; "I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have none other gods besides me." Where He is concerned, our regard and obedience to man must cease.—He will not give glory to another.

But the prophet points out another cause of this fearful denunciation. The man on whom the vengeance will fall, is he "whose heart departeth from the Lord." This is the great sin,—the root of every other transgression and crime,—inward unfaithfulness,—the turning away of the heart from God. When a man is getting careless in religious matters; when he is becoming a proud or covetous character, or a sensualist; or falling into gross sins:—all such declensions can be traced to one principal cause. The great outlet, through which the stream is pouring forth, laying waste the finest portion of God's creation, is seated very deep. It is the disorder of the heart, which has departed from the living God. In thus tracing back sin to its source; we touch upon a most important subject,—those secret desires, emotions and lusts, with which the omniscient Searcher of hearts only is acquainted. He is the Creator of the human heart; and he has in mercy destined it to become his dwelling-place,—"Know ye not that ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost? This temple is holy. If any man defile this temple, him will God destroy." A man may be convinced in his judgment, that a thing is sinful; but if his heart is in league with sin, fascinated and

ensnared by it, all his better convictions will be of no avail; since the enemy has got possession of the stronghold. There is a time when the heart is rendered susceptible, and when the Spirit of truth finds freer access to it. Ah, brethren, we have every one of us our time of grace. In younger years is the most favourable time. And who has not had favourable moments, when the Lord was standing at the door? Who has not then felt the excellency of true religion, of intercourse with God, and hearing the word of life? Can you not remember the striking occasions, when you felt "drawn with cords of love?" Perhaps the drawing was successful. You yielded to the good Spirit. You commenced to run the Christian race. You arose with the virgins who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom. But then came temptations, the cares of the world or its deceitful pleasures. You were hindered by this and that engagement. Then prayer was neglected, or became formal and lifeless. A cold, chilling blast crept over the heart—Satan's influence—which was not dispelled by one earnest aspiration for grace. And what has been the result? Perhaps an entire falling back—if not into open sin, yet into the world. One thing is clear at any rate, that the heart is not right. It has departed from God, and therefore all is wrong. Some one else is usurping authority there. Read the biographies of men, in which the inward workings of the heart with reference to God, are somewhat faithfully laid open; and you will see, in what a variety of ways this

sad and dangerous drawing back—departing from God—is effected.

And then, what are the consequences? Just look into the text, and you will see: "He shall be like the heath in the desert." What is the meaning of this? It signifies that such a man shall be in a blighted, sad, unhappy condition—lifeless, barren, wretched. The heath which grows in the desert is a sorry, worthless shrub; withering from want of moisture: and truly such is the spiritual state of that heart, from which grace has departed.

Another symptom is; "He shall not see when good cometh." Such was the case of the Jews. They hoped for deliverance from enemies and for prosperity, when their doom was sealed. They looked forward with eager desire—but no deliverance came. And is not this exactly the delusion of men who have cast off the Lord? They expect great things. Their imagination is filled with pictures of earthly prosperity and happiness. But the further they proceed on life's weary journey, the more does the phantom recede from their sight. "Vanity, all is vanity!" Disappointment and vexation meet them at every step.

One more sad feature, arising from this departure and relapse, is mentioned; "He shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited." This melancholy picture reminds one of some of the regions in Arabia and along the Dead sea;—some of the most dreary and desolate portions of the creation; —at which even infidel travellers have been horror-

struck, and received the impression, that they were lying under a curse of the Almighty. The wretched inhabitants are in a sickly and suffering state, from the bad quality of the water, and the scanty means whereby to support life. If such be, in a spiritual point of view, the parched, barren, desolate, starving condition of a soul departed from God, groaning and dragging on a miserable existence;—then backsliding has indeed been followed by a fearful visitation. And is it not so? especially in the case of that sinner who has had his day of grace;—who in former days tasted the sweetness of peace with God;—and then forsook the right way? "The wicked" says the Lord, "are like the troubled sea casting up mire and dirt; there is no peace to the wicked." "Tribulation and wrath upon every soul that doeth evil." Bodily pain and sickness,—losses and privations and other temporal trials,—are easy to bear; compared with the restlessness, mental anxiety, and dread concerning the future,—as suggested by this solemn declaration.

II. We consider, *who is the blessed man?* Amidst the general decay of religion, there doubtless were a few here and there, who continued steadfast and unshaken in their faith and trust in Jehovah;—who abhorred idolatry and bore a faithful testimony for God and his truth. Such noble witnesses, under most painful trials, were Jeremiah, and some other good men at the court of a bad king, who protected God's prophet, especially in a time of imminent danger. How precious in the eyes of the Lord

such faithful servants are, we see from many gracious promises and assurances given to them. And we may rest assured, these promises hold good to this day: "Fear not, Abraham: I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." A book of remembrance is written before him, for them that fear the Lord; "and they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my jewels."

"Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." And he whom God blesses —he shall be blessed indeed. As a picture receives its striking effect by the contrast of light and darkness,—so it is here. The blessedness pronounced upon the good man, becomes exceedingly sweet and cheering and additionally impressive, when contrasted with the wretchedness and blighted state and curse of the man, whose heart departeth from God. Oh let the comparison receive that solemn consideration which it deserves, and sink into our hearts!

That trust in God should be the cause of real blessedness, seems to me to be a most obvious and natural thing. Is he not our Father? Are we not depending on Him for our common daily mercies? Does not a child love and confide in his parent? And is not this implicit trust always rewarded?—Yes! Instantly after every prayer and drawing out of the heart towards Him, there is the reward of a sweet peace and satisfaction, and a kind of inward assurance, "I am blessed, because my Father loves me." So it was felt by the Apostle, when he wrote to his brethren,—

"whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Yes! "blessed is the man," and blessed the family and home, and blessed the nation, "whose God is the Lord." How clearly has God established the difference between a God-fearing people, and the infidel and popish nations—in the late revolutionary struggles of Europe! And I feel persuaded, that in our ominous times, this difference will ere long appear in a more striking light.

But let us shortly glance at the peculiar features and blessed position of the man of faith. The prophet compares him to "a tree planted by the waters, that spreadeth out her roots by the river." A more favourable spot cannot be selected for a tree, than by the banks of a river. *There* is generally found the fertile soil: *there* is a certain freshness in the atmosphere even in the hottest season, which you find nowhere else: and *there* above all is water, the life and chief support of the vegetable world. What a beautiful simile! Such is the believer in Jehovah Jesus Christ. As to his spiritual position, he is a tree of righteousness in the garden of God,—his Church. He breathes the heavenly atmosphere of that communion—"Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." His favourite place, where he loves to dwell and refresh his soul, is near the river of life. He drinks and is satisfied. How often is this river mentioned! How often are its waters recommended! (as in Ezek. xlvii. 1—12. Rev. xxii. 1, 2:) and how affectionately

does Jesus call upon the weary and thirsty: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink!"

Listen to the strains of holy joy and gratitude, uttered by one who loved to be near these waters; "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, he leadeth me beside the still waters: he restoreth my soul, he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

Now compare this sweet rest and refreshment near the water of life, with the parched places in the wilderness,—the dreary burnt up land of salt inhabited by the child of the world;—and then, make your own choice.

The prophet further declares,—"He shall not see when heat cometh." Of the other it was said, "he shall not see when good cometh." "Her leaf shall ever be green:" because in the greatest heat there is no fear of a tree suffering, and its leaves being shrivelled and burnt, when standing by the river side. The scorching heat which would act most unfavourably under other circumstances,—which blasts the very heath in the desert,—cannot affect the favoured tree; because it lives near a reviving element. What a lesson here for us all! My brethren, the scorching heat of trials will come while we live in a sinful world. Temptations from the world, or arising from the corruptions of our own hearts, will try us. They are the common lot of all God's people, and of the children of the world. They are sent to prove our faith; to separate the gold from the dross; to bring the fruits

of faith to maturity. But the Lord declares, that a God-fearing man need not fear concerning his safety, or his prosperity; if he only live near the water. There is something unspeakably precious in the freshness, the liveliness, faith, and love of the believer, under and after heavy trials. Then it can be seen, how God educates his people; how he prepares them for heaven; how he makes them to be conformed to their Saviour's likeness. Oh, if you wish to be like the green tree full of hopeful blossoms; if you wish that fruit may grow on you, and ripen for heaven; let me give you the best advice:—Go to the fountain: Live near its refreshing water.

Again; such a believer "shall not be careful in the year of drought!" Jeremiah lived in such days of drought. In a spiritual sense, all was dried and burned up around him. But he still trusted in the Lord: and that carried him through. And so shall we be safely carried through, if we do but follow the good example of those who have gone before us. India is in many respects a country very unfavourable to spiritual life. There are many causes which are calculated to draw the soul down—to cause the graces to languish, and make one feel deeply concerned about the question—"How shall I save my soul alive?" Now here are most comforting words,—"I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is." "Be thou faithful, unto death; and I will give thee a crown of life." "He who hath begun a good work in you will finish it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Let us look to the last promise in my text. It is worthy of a whole sermon:—"*He shall not cease from yielding fruit.*" Green leaves are all very well, my brethren, to give a tree a fair appearance. These show that there is life in it. But fruit is the thing. This is what the Lord desires: "These three years have I come seeking fruit from this tree." A good tree will in the course of nature bear fruit; and by way of excellence it is mentioned, that the trees which thus grow—by the banks of this river,—not only bear once a year: but they do not cease from yielding fruit. Such a tree is very precious. Would not a gardener rejoice in it, and be proud of it? And such a result, in spite of all drought and burning heat, storms and winter frost, will Divine grace effect. The powers of the elements cannot hinder it, but must all help to contribute towards this blessed result.

Now, my hearers, this test is so simple, so striking, so pointed; that every one can make the application of it to his own case. Here are two parties mentioned. Into these two parties God has from the beginning divided and classified the children of men. To which do you belong?—to those who trust in man, in an arm of flesh, in a poor creature? Or do you,—do you really trust in God?—in the God of the Bible, and not in a deity of your own imagination? How many vain trusts there are! How many delusions! How the god of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel should shine into them!

Let us remember one important point. This trust in the creature, this idolatry of the corrupt heart, has its origin in secret recesses, in a gradual but wilful departure from the living God. Examine that source of good and evil: watch over its progress; and you may find the truth of it confirmed in your own case. And if you do; try by the grace of God to remedy the great mischief.

What does a man get by forsaking the waters,—by departing from the Lord? Look at the prophet's declaration. He gets barrenness,—a dreary, restless state of mind, and unceasing misery. Goldsmith said; "Without a friend, the world is but a wilderness." And without the Friend of friends, the world is a hell, and man is under a curse.

Let me entreat you to choose the portion of the blessed man;—the garden with the river. Allow yourself to be planted there, near the pure refreshing waters. Here is life and fulness of joy. Never has any, who settled down on this blessed spot, regretted his choice. Seek to be rooted and grounded in Jesus. Here is the place,—here are the resources for fruitfulness and happiness. "The path of the just shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

THE FATHERS' DESIRE FOR A BETTER COUNTRY.

Hebrews xi. 14—16.

For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned: but now they desire a better country, that is an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city.

The remarkable chapter in which we read these words, contains a number of short, concise, historical sketches; in which faith is represented as the great principle of action. A variety of characters, living at different times, from the primeval ages before the flood, down to the days of Samuel, are recommended to our notice and imitation. They all had one definite object clearly in view. They sought for a country,—a better country than the one in which they were sojourning, even a heavenly. This desire possessed them all: and faith in Jehovah gave this desire life and strength. The consciousness that He was their God, imparted to this desire a right direction. Where God is, there is heaven; there is fulness of joy; there are pleasures which continue uninterrupted for ever. Therefore they longed to be with him. Their hearts

being raised above the world; they considered themselves as strangers and pilgrims here. And herein lies the main difference between a true son of Abraham and a Canaanite; between a child of God and a child of the world. The one is on a journey. The other is at home. The one has his treasure in heaven: and the other on the earth. The one by his desires after God and heaven, is impelled forward; striving, praying, wrestling, to obtain the great prize. The other knows nothing of all this: he seeks his portion here. True, he wrestles and strives too. He is full of cares and full of labour: but his object is in another direction: he seeks his good things in this life.

Those holy men, enumerated by the Apostle, were extraordinary characters in their times; quite a separate class. They had little in common with the contemporaries among whom they lived. It is said at the end of the chapter—"The world was not worthy of them." God from the beginning made this separation between his people and the rest of the world. Though they must needs live in the world, they are not one with it. Their course points in a different direction. "Be ye separate:"—ye are a peculiar people: your interests must not be mixed up with theirs.

If that distinctive separation were to cease, the Church would be destroyed. When the sons of God made wives of the daughters of men, the existence of the Church was in danger. Wickedness prevailed. The earth was corrupt and filled with violence: and this led

to the destruction of the first world by water. God has had his faithful witnesses at all times. They are the salt of the earth. They are his preachers of righteousness. Their example of goodness and holiness acts in two ways: it is a blessing to some who are thereby benefited; and it is condemnation to unbelievers.

How different one feels in reading such a chapter as this, from what one does, when the mind is occupied in the secular concerns of the day. In contemplating the lives of the men here presented to us; surely even the careless man, who makes no claim to spirituality of mind, must be impressed with the thought, that man is made for another state, superior to the present.

May God bless his word to us this morning, and raise our desires towards that better country, which he has prepared for his own people!

We consider—

I. THE EARNEST DESIRE AND HOPE OF THE PILGRIM FATHERS.

II. THE GROUND OF THEIR HOPE.

I. *The earnest desire and hope of the pilgrim fathers.* "They that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country." The saying or declaration here referred to, is found in the preceding verse: "They"—that is, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and others,—these patriarchs "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Such was indeed the condition of Abraham and of his descendants. He was commanded by God to go out of the land of his nativity; and to forsake friends and kindred, and to live

a stranger in a foreign land. And of the very land which God promised to him and his seed as an eternal inheritance, he received in his lifetime not a foot in possession; with the exception of a field which he bought for a burying place. But he willingly submitted to this trial. That which rendered it comparatively easy to him was his *faith*. Thus he resigned himself into the hands of his Heavenly Friend. He knew it was Jehovah who had called him; and he felt persuaded that under His guidance all would end well.

My brethren, when we are in the path of duty; the consciousness that we are doing or suffering the will of God, keeps a man under all circumstances calm and even cheerful. There is not a pleasanter journey than that which a traveller undertakes by His direction: for though it may be beset with troubles and dangers, he has the comfort to know, that He who called him to go in this way, is bearing him company in it. Such was the feeling of Jacob, when he set out from his father's house, a solitary traveller indeed; but saw that night the heavenly ladder, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon it: and God spoke to him and promised him his blessing. Still, with all these privileges and gracious Divine communications, the patriarchs felt as to every step they went, that they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth. Though they saw the earthly Canaan with their own eyes, and saluted the sacred soil; each in his own case felt, that it was not his real home. Each

looked forward to a possession and dwelling-place of a more satisfactory character. How strikingly did this ardent desire manifest itself at the dying bed of Jacob! While he was bestowing valedictory blessings on his sons; and while in prophetic vision he was distributing the promised land and inheritance among them; his departing soul received a sight of the incorruptible inheritance which is by Christ; and he exclaimed; "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!" This pilgrim mind, in which the fathers accomplished their course, shewed itself on other occasions. When king Pharaoh asked Jacob, "How old art thou?" he replied, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been; and have not attained unto those of my fathers." The same was the disposition of David,—a feeling matured in his old age, when resigning the sceptre into the hands of his son Solomon. After recounting the goodness of God to him and his house, he said, "We are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding!"

What then was the object and desire of those holy men? My text replies, "They that say such things," —who acknowledge that their life is but a short journey,—plainly "declare that they seek a country,"—or rather,—a fatherland.

And this fatherland was not the one from which Abraham had come out; neither Ur in Chaldea, nor

Haran in Syria, whither he first went with his father Terah. Nor did Jacob regard Canaan in that light, after he had gone down to Egypt to see his beloved Joseph once more; for they had possessed no real property and no fixed residence there; and the Apostle remarks, "If they had been mindful of that country from which they came out, they might have returned to whence they came." But this was not what they wanted and sought after. What then prompted them to dwell as strangers among the Amorites and with the sons of Ham? It was the certainty, that neither in Canaan nor in Chaldea, nor in fact any where upon earth, was to be found what their faith and hope expected and kept in view. This was their feeling:—"We want another home,—a fatherland,—where we shall no longer be strangers,—where the Canaanite will not trouble us,—where no Philistine will strive for our wells." The Apostle is more explicit in the 16th verse regarding this desired land:—"But now they desire a better country; that is an HEAVENLY."

This is the place,—the final and eternal port of peace and rest. The heart and mind of the patriarchs firmly fixed upon this.

The strongest affections of the human heart naturally find their centre in *home*,—the beloved land of our birth,—the scenes of our earlier recollections and youthful associations. Who does not love to think of childhood, and the paternal roof, and the days when brothers and sisters were happily surrounding the loved father and mother?—where the old and young,

in their morning and evening devotions, gathered round the family altar? Who does not love to think of the parish Church, in which he used to worship God, and where perhaps many a religious impression was received in hearing the word, which cannot be obliterated as long as memory exercises its power?

We all long to see that home again; and perhaps to spend the evening of life in the dear much-cherished place. And yet if that wish be realised, we shall find that that home after all is not the real one. The immortal spirit longs for a better, a more perfect place.

Ah! we must, with the patriarch's desire, seek a a better country, even an heavenly. God teaches his children in many ways to seek it. When Abraham had to offer up his Isaac, the son of his old age;—when Sarah, the faithful companion of his pilgrimage, was dead;—when Isaac was grieved by family troubles, and had to send away the younger son to save his life from the revengeful temper of the elder;—when Jacob lost his darling Joseph, and mourned over the bad conduct of his other sons;—when his beloved Rachel died,—an affliction which he mentioned with much feeling even in his old age:—on these and many other occasions it was, that God awakened and increased in the hearts of his faithful servants, a desire after a better—a heavenly country.

Our Heavenly Father takes care not to let us remain strangers to himself, and satisfied with an earthly portion. Accordingly the same course of dis-

cipline which He pursued with his beloved and faithful servants three thousand years ago, He adopts even now with all who feel themselves strangers here, and have set out on their way to the better land. The picture of future earthly happiness, which the youth sketched out to himself in bright colours, is never realized in the graver years of manhood. As the traveller advances, and year after year is rolling away in solemn and unceasing revolution; the pilgrim becomes more fully conscious of the fact, that human life is on the whole made up of the same events and incidents, as it was in the days of the patriarchs;—of cares, trials and suffering,—interspersed with here and there a joyful scene. Still at the end, when its stage is run, it will appear to have been but labour and sorrow. I say, such it will prove in its best aspect; —for with him who has not the pilgrim's mind,—who has no definite object of seeking a happier future —to him, human life, when it comes to its termination, must appear like an enigma unsolved; a great lesson not learned but neglected; a grand disappointment,—a fearful and hopeless shipwreck.

My brethren, the pleasant thought of home,—the intense love of it, and desire of returning to it after a long absence abroad, which fills the heart of many,—has a deep and a superior signification. It reminds the believer of *his* rest; and it points him to his heavenly home. If you ask, what is the main object of faith?—It invariably tends, like the magnetic needle, to one point, which is this: "I seek satis-

faction in that which is imperishable, a good possession beyond this world." This spiritual desire moved Abraham, and his fellow heirs in the kingdom of God. They sought and they found, by walking in communion with God, the way to reach that state and that place, which ensure abiding felicity to the soul.

God had promised an earthly Canaan to their posterity; but there was something more, something far higher, in these repeated promises. They discovered a spiritual sense in them. They opened the shell, and found the precious contents. They clearly perceived, that a heavenly Canaan and a new Jerusalem were the real and far more glorious inheritance, which God had prepared for them.

One is inclined to ask, how did the patriarchs know this?—because, in reading their history, little or nothing almost is mentioned of heaven, and their prospects of a better world. I answer;—A man will understand and explain the word of God, according to that measure of light he possesses. An unenlightened mind sees very little of a spiritual character in Abraham's history: whereas the Apostle recognised great faith,—a spiritual mind and an ardent desire of heaven in his disposition. Abraham's faith raised him above the world. He saw heaven as the prize of a faithful pilgrim's calling. This hope was strengthened, increased and developed. It became, under divine guidance and help, a certainty to his soul.

Oh, brethren, how desirable is it, that amidst the changing scenes of life, so many troubles, cares and

disappointments,—we should come to a certainty as to a better world; and fix our hearts more fully upon the attainment of that inheritance.

II. We consider, *the ground on which this hope of the Patriarchs rested.* The Apostle states this ground in these words;—"Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city." From this declaration we learn, in what manner the hope of a better world was disclosed to them. They arrived at a certain hope, by making a reasonable and simple inference from that solemn declaration of Jehovah;—"I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant,—to be a God unto thee." Now a covenant which was intended to last for ever, and to extend to all generations; had respect not only to this life, but to a better state hereafter. This was the conclusion which Abraham justly drew from the promise. He believed that the promise of Canaan, which was appended in the following verses, conveyed a clear hope of a heavenly Canaan: and his faith and hope were not disappointed. God taught him to see and understand it, in that light. In his after manifestations to Isaac, Jacob, Moses and others; God always called himself the God of Abraham. We know that our Saviour, from this name proved to the Sadducees the resurrection of the dead, and a glorious existence hereafter: and this delightful truth, which no proud Sadducee had seen before—because he would not see—Jacob and Moses and David

had learned from the word. The Sadducees said,—"Does God care for man, and take notice of his poor concerns? He is far above such trifling things." But the inspired Apostle says: "God is not ashamed to be called their God." Whenever, therefore, we look up to heaven; and utter with devout feeling the words, "My God, my Father,"—let us gratefully remember, that in this glorious name are contained our adoption into his family, our undisputed right to trust in him, and our certain hope, that we have a home, an eternal home, beyond the skies: for He has prepared for us a city. The fathers who died in faith, did not wait for it in vain. They have long since arrived in the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. We know that they are there now; with the general assembly, the Church of the first-born.

Let us thankfully remember, that a brighter light is shining on our path, who are still sojourning below, than shone on their's. The only begotten Son, who took upon himself the seed of Abraham, is not ashamed to call us his brethren. And his God is indeed our God, and his Father our Father! He who builds his house upon this foundation, is indeed a wise man. If rains descend and storms rage furiously; the house will stand, for it is founded on a rock. What may a faithful, sound, simple-minded believer not deduce from these words—"My God—my Father—my Saviour?" It reminds one of the triumphant and conclusive argument of St. Paul: "All things are yours: whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or

life, or death, or things present, or things to come: all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." There is, my brethren, a most instructive and solemn lesson for us contained in this text. The cloud of witnesses who are presented to us,—what is their testimony to men living in these latter days? Certainly their example clearly shows this at least,—that a believer in God has a certain definite object before him; which, amidst a variety of other minor concerns, engages his attention above all others. He seeks, he desires—A HOME, A FATHERLAND. He does not hide this hope: he is not afraid to speak of it: he will let others know, that it possesses the highest value in his estimation. You will see in his life and conduct, that the hope of a better world has a powerful influence upon his actions, his temper and motives. "*We have no abiding city here, but we seek one to come.*" This hope regulates his principles. He therefore cannot sit down, and eat and drink and be merry like others. He cannot sleep and be drowsy: but he is sober and watchful. He is as a pilgrim ought to be; ever ready to proceed on his journey: with his loins girded, his lamp trimmed and his light burning. He expects his Lord's coming; and daily prepares for the event. He has his business, his secular calling, like others around him; and he discharges all, as a conscientious man should do:—but he makes all his temporal concerns and engagements subservient to the great object. "Let no man hinder me in this, I wish to reach

home: whatever others may do; I must, like Lot, hasten to save my soul alive."

My dear hearers, you must be aware, that all do not possess this pilgrim disposition. Many seem to feel far otherwise—at least they act as if they were always to remain here: and while the world rolls on, and their vessel is swiftly gliding down on the stream of time towards the ocean of eternity; they seem not aware of it; and lose their precious days.

That which is born of flesh overcometh not the world. The child of the world has no interest in Abraham's God and Abraham's hope.

This pilgrim disposition must be created of God within us. Before the heart is changed and rendered susceptible of higher enjoyments, we love our present home and this world and the pleasures of Egypt, much better than the promised land.

But disappointment and remorse will come one day or another. There is a preacher in every sinner's heart, who testifies against him and fills him with fear. There is a restlessness which must convince him, that after all, he is not in his real element. There is an accusing conscience, and there is a voice from above, which speak loud and faithfully; "How well would it be, if you made up your mind to be a pilgrim, and to seek a better possession! for this is not the thing which satisfies your soul; and what will it be in the end?" Now the voice of the Gospel still speaks to men in accents of mercy. Oh! that you would be persuaded to arise and seek that, which many before you

have sought and found. Why is this pilgrim's path. which the patriarchs trod, so absolutely necessary to be the path of all believers, before they can be permitted to enter into the long promised city? It is because it is the only safe path to heaven. It is because the kingdom of God is first to be founded and established within us. We have to be new created and prepared for it: and this is done during the trials of the way. Let us joyfully proceed onward; walking in the footsteps of Abraham, the father of the faithful. Our path is shortening every day. The more of the road we get behind us, the nearer we shall be to the celestial city. We possess a much clearer view of it, than believers did under the old dispensation. What a happy place must that be, where suffering and pain shall be no more!—from which all that untold variety of ills, which sin has brought into the world, will be removed for ever! What a happy society will that be in which all are pure and good,—from which all the wicked are excluded! What a happy home will that be, in which we shall be re-united to beloved friends who have gone before us, never to be separated again! What a glorious place will that be, where we shall meet with our fathers in the faith, Abraham, David and the Prophets; and where, above all, we shall behold the Son of Man, with our own eyes; and see, like Thomas, the print of the nails in his hands and feet, and his pierced side,—see in reality that Jesus, our Lord and our God, to whom, in the weariness of this pilgrimage, our humble prayers were addressed,

and by whose grace we were enabled to conquer and persevere to the end! Then indeed it will be seen, that it was worth while to become a pilgrim. One day in his heavenly courts will amply indemnify us for all the trials of the way.

If then we have set out on our way, shall we cast off our confidence, and return again? Be that far from us! No: we will go on, by that way in which He leads us. We will persevere, lest He who was not ashamed to be called the God of the patriarchs, should be at last ashamed of us. How long will it be before we reach that home? Ah! but a little while. A few years more, and we too shall die. May it be, like them, in faith!—saying, not merely like Jacob, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord;"—but, like Simeon,—"Mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES.

Heb. xii. 1, 2.

Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto JESUS *the Author and Finisher of our faith.*

So long as we live in this world, we need exhortation, warning, and stirring up; in order to diligence, faithfulness and perseverance in the ways of God. The corruption of an evil heart, and our engagements with an evil world, throw so many hindrances in our path; that we are constantly exposed to danger of suffering shipwreck in faith and a good conscience. Ah! how quickly do we lose the blessings we have received, and the good impressions which the Spirit of truth brought home to our hearts in the hour of his gracious visitations!

It is according to a wisely established order of divine providence, that blessings are bestowed in proportion to man's exertion in the pursuit of them; and for the most part, we see diligence rewarded, and indolence put to shame. "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth abundantly shall reap abundantly." There may occasionally be

exceptions; so that the idle and careless is loaded with plenty, and the diligent man is suffered to be in want: but in spiritual things, diligence is never disappointed; faithfulness finds its full reward; he that asks is sure to receive; and he that seeks is sure to find. God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. To him that endeavours to improve his entrusted talent, more is uniformly given, and he is made to possess abundance.

We are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses, who confirm the truth of this fact. They call to us from the happy place where they now dwell:—"Be faithful, be diligent in the concerns of your souls!" If we read the history of good men and women in old time, we learn that their whole experience was in close harmony with this rule of Divine providence. None ever suffered loss, but in consequence of his own remissness; nor did any devote himself to God sincerely, without receiving grace sufficient for the time of need. To encourage believers in this respect, the Apostle, in the chapter preceding that of my text, numbers up the examples of men who were witnesses of God's grace, who by faith went forward on the thorny path, and entered, as conquerors, the kingdom of heaven. He then proceeds to exhort his brethren, to press on in the same desirable way. Our main business as Christians, is a daily struggle and effort to become holy and free from sin. Let us give the important subject a closer attention in the present hour.

We consider—

I. THE BESETTING SIN.

II. HOW IT IS TO BE LAID ASIDE.

III. THE MOTIVES WHICH SHOULD PROMPT US TO THE EFFORT.

I. *The besetting sin.* It sounds rather singular, that such a thing should be present with those, who have, by true change of heart, been brought to God; whose sins have been forgiven; and who may therefore be considered as passed from darkness to light, freed from the power of sin; and who by grace are enabled to address God as their Father. For it is said, "He that is born of God, cannot sin:" and again,—"There is therefore no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." And yet such sincere and true believers, whose upright aim it is to follow Christ; are in my text called upon to lay aside every sin; which clearly shews, that, while in this vale of tears, they are never entirely freed from a sense of it and the influence of it.

It may therefore not be unprofitable, if we enter upon a particular enquiry into those symptoms of sinful weakness, which Christians do feel, and against which they have to struggle.

Now a believer is truly free from the *guilt* of sin. After it has been given him, to take refuge in Jesus, and in faith to look to Him as his only hope, and only comfort and source of peace; he is no more under condemnation. He can joyfully say, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" He is reconciled and accepted by his heavenly Father. His sins are forgiven.

All his unrighteousnesses are covered. The blood of reconciliation testifies on his behalf. Therefore he is safe: and if, in moments of doubt and weakness, his heart condemn him, he can say, "I have an Advocate with the Father." He appeals to the merits of his Redeemer. He hides himself within the Rock of Ages.

A believer is delivered from the punishment of sin. When he fled for deliverance to Christ,—when he received pardoning and justifying grace:—at the same moment, the sentence of the law was removed. He heard Christ say, as it were, to his soul, "Thou shalt live, yea thou shalt live. I have blotted out thy sins as a cloud, and thy transgression as a thick cloud." With feelings of heart-felt gratitude, he then appropriated to himself the blessed words,—"Surely he—the great Mediator—has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; he was wounded for our transgression, he was bruised for our iniquity; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed."

Again; a believer is free from the *dominion* of sin; this dark and dreadful power has been weakened, broken down by renewing and sanctifying grace, shining with her heavenly rays into the heart, descending like a refreshing shower upon the parched ground. Sin, like a conquered tyrant, is lying prostrate at the believer's feet. Still, it is not destroyed. Hence the exhortation of Paul,—"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."

In this sense, my brethren, the believer is truly

delivered from sin. The guilt of it can no longer trouble his conscience: he need not fear the punishment of it: nor can its detested power keep him any longer in slavish servitude:—for in all these respects Christ has become to him an all-sufficient Saviour. A glorious deliverance indeed!—in the experience of which, the pardoned, justified believer has every reason to exclaim, rejoicing;—"Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

However, after all these unspeakably great privileges, the root of sin is still left within us. The innate corruption, the hidden seed of the serpent, will not be extirpated, so long as we carry this mortal tabernacle about with us. It is very deeply seated in the human heart. The most diligent search can never fully trace it, and lay it bare. That indwelling corruption, my brethren, is the weight, of which the Apostle speaks in the text. Ah, what a wearying burden! How often does it bow down the longing pilgrim on his onward course! This is that evil, by which even the holy Apostle was driven to the bitter complaint;—"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" This is that law in the members, which constantly is warring with the law of the mind. How much of this corruption is found in the heart of advanced Christians, was proved by David,—one of the noblest and most pious characters in olden times,—when he cried,—"Who can understand his errors? cleanse Thou me from secret faults." It is a great mistake therefore, when people fancy that a true Chris-

tian must, as a matter of course, be a faultless man. On the contrary, you will always find, that he has to struggle all his life long, against those peculiar sinful propensities, by which he was governed before he sought the Lord. For instance, the man of a passionate irritable temper, will have long to struggle; and will experience many a conflict, before that enemy is altogether subdued. Another, who contracted an unfortunate habit of talking much of himself, and too frequently of the faults of others—how difficult will he find the task of setting a seal upon his lips, lest he be betrayed again by his old propensity! Another, whose proud and haughty disposition was allowed for years its unbridled sway,—though Divine grace has changed his heart, and brought him to the Cross of the Redeemer;—yet how prone does he feel, when temptation comes, to let the old man have his own way again! How long has another to struggle,—how earnestly to pray,—before his soul is delivered from the strong grasp of covetousness and the inordinate love of worldly things! How long are many sincere believers troubled with some other particular sins, prejudices and infirmities,—which by long habit have assumed the right of a second nature! How many of our plans and designs and proceedings,—though to outward appearance all may be fair and good and proper—are conceived in selfishness, or mixed up with improper motives; and we discover, perhaps a long time after, that in pretending to honour God, we sought our own glory—and in the laudable effort to benefit our fellow-beings,—we aspired after a name, after self-exaltation!

How imperfect are our best works! How defective our virtues, how weak our faith, how great our want of true humility, of charity and patience! How many hours are spent in vanity and trifles! How many an opportunity is allowed to escape, when we might do some real good, or prevent some evil! How often are we silent, when we ought to speak! and how many times do we offend with our tongues; and needlessly hurt others! We are fearful and almost cowardly when we ought to be bold: and unnecessarily forward, when modest reserve would be our proper temper.

How defective are many of us in a guarded controul over our thoughts and words;—how backward in the care and growth of our spiritual life;—how cold and heartless in prayer;—how remiss in a sober and devout consideration of the word of God;—and how slow in striving for the crown of life!

Now these are a few instances out of many, in which the Christian, with his eyes open, will discover more or less of his weaknesses and short-comings: and again and again, the painful conviction comes home to his innermost soul, that he is surrounded by dangers, sin within and sin without; and that it is only by Divine grace he can stand his ground.

II. Let us consider, *in what manner this weight, this besetting sin, is laid aside and overcome.* A great point is gained, if sin is viewed in its real character. A believer, who is spiritually awake, cannot trifle with it, nor extenuate it. He has learned by past experience, what it leads to; and no

man in his sober senses, would entertain an intruding stranger, who, he knows, aims at his life. The tiger and hyæna, and other wild animals, live and thrive in the dense jungle. They shun the open and cultivated country. Thus sin finds a ready harbour only in hearts darkened and blinded by ignorance. Let the light of Divine knowledge shine into your souls. Allow the word of God its fair and legitimate influence: and self-delusion, and all false ideas of religion, will soon lose their hold: and you will feel sorrow and contrition for the past.

Yes, brethren, we must learn to find out sin in its lurking places: and if you wish to get at it, do this;—receive the light of Divine truth, and pray with David, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." When we thus become fairly acquainted with our foe; then it is time to engage him with the proper weapons.

The Israelites committed a serious fault after entering the land of Canaan, in suffering a part of the old inhabitants to remain in the land. The Divine command was decisive:—they were to be rooted out. Their preservation cost Israel dear. That man is undone, who makes a league with the Canaanites, and views them rather as friendly neighbours than deadly foes. It is not sufficient to be acquainted with our faults; or to lament them, when conscience speaks out. We must go to war with sin, with a resolution to die or to conquer. In that case, success is sure.

We shall soon find its power decreasing, and gradually breaking down. It is an arduous conflict. The significant terms—crucifying the flesh, mortifying the old man,—so frequently mentioned in Scripture,—clearly show, that patient endurance and earnest application are indispensable. The race is not run in one day. The conflict is not ended in one battle. Day after day it must be renewed and continued.

And all this must be done in the name and power of Jesus Christ. As the Apostle declares ;—"Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith." Depend upon it, this is the right course. Take a clear and full, spiritual sight of Jesus. In communion with Him we find the hidden source of spiritual life and energy,—of ample encouragement and comfort. There is a power inherent in his death and resurrection, sufficient for overcoming all the enemies of our souls. Try to fight with sin in your own strength; and you will soon be worsted. Try it in the strength of Christ; and victory is sure. "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief." When that father, who spoke these words, was thus in conflict within; his faith was effectual, and his child was cured.

We hear people asking, "How can I become changed, converted?" Try the remedy here presented. Look to Christ. Turn away from self. Give up self-working. Look—as a poor helpless sinner:—look in faith, believing that He can, that He will, save you. Place yourself again and again in this way before Him: and I can give you the certain promise, that sin

will be overcome, and you shall be a conqueror. It is not by dint of solid and clever reasoning :—it is not by adopting a high standard of morality :—but it is by faith. Faith is the victory that overcometh the world.

If a person has come to that desirable experience ;—if he can say,—"I desire to live in the element of grace ; the love of Christ constraining me, no longer to live to myself but to Him ;" that person will obtain strength sufficient, to stand in the evil day ; to resist sin, to escape the wiles of Satan, and to stand his ground to the last.

Therefore said an old servant of Christ, "I have long ago given up all projects and self-made resolutions for holiness. I have ceased to promise to my God golden mountains ; because I found that all my best resolutions evaporated like water. With the light of every new day, sensible of my infirmities, I go to my Saviour, saying ; "Lord, remember me ! Let thy right-hand lead me in the path of life : put thy fear into my heart : give me a holy dread of all sin, and hatred against it. May thy good Spirit reprove me when I am ready to decline : and may I have sufficient strength to conquer in the day of evil."

If we thus commence and continue, with prayer ; we may rest assured that the weight of sin will soon be removed. We shall breathe, as it were, a purer atmosphere. Ah what relief ! And we shall be enabled, with patience and cheerfulness, to run the race that is set before us.

III. Let me now shortly allude to *some motives, which should prompt to persevering effort in this holy*

warfare. The first, mentioned in my text, is the example of those holy men, whom the Apostle enumerates in the eleventh chapter :—"we are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses." By the power and grace of God, *they* laid aside every weight, lived above the world, and prepared for heaven. Those worthies of former ages stand before us, as an unanswerable proof, that one who loves his Saviour, *can* overcome the world and obtain the great prize. Have *they* been enabled to accomplish this, who were men of like passions with ourselves ? Then may we cherish a sure hope, that we too, in the same strength, shall overcome at last. Could they stand firm, witnessing for the faith, when tried in the hottest furnace of affliction ? Why should we not,—whose path is not so rough, nor attended by so many privations ? If, following their example, we rely upon the same covenant grace, and gather the same manna which nourished their souls through this dreary wilderness, we shall share the same glorious place, which is already their everlasting inheritance !

Again ; the Apostle represents CHRIST Himself as our pattern. He points to him as the great Captain of salvation,—the Conqueror with many crowns,—as the Author and Finisher of faith. Remember Him, your heavenly Leader and Friend. He trod the same path on which you proceed. He became perfect through suffering. He might have enjoyed the world : but He desired not its joys. He endured the cross, despising the shame. He submitted to the deepest ignominy ; and bore, with unshaken firmness

and patience, the contradictions,—the most cruel treatment,—of sinners. He left us an example, that we should follow his steps. "He that saith, that he abideth in Him; ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked;" and should beware, lest, by conforming to this world, he lose the love and approbation of the Most High.

And then, another motive, which must prompt us to lay aside sin in running the heavenly race, is the dreadful weight it is upon the mind; bowing down the heart; pressing with fearful force upon the conscience. Pleasant as it may appear to frivolous, unthinking people; in graver and sober moments, they feel that they are deceived, and belie their own fancy. And when conscience gets awakened in the hour of danger, they become utterly wretched. Ah, brethren, if you really wish to enjoy a comfortable and calm and easy frame of mind, let me advise you to break the bands of sin asunder; and look for true liberty in following Christ. If we wish to get on in the path to heaven, we must get rid of our encumbrances. Paul compared his noble career through life to a race. "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Such a race is set before us all: but how can we set out, if our loins be not girded, and if our lamps be untrimmed.

The prize held out to us, well deserves our best efforts. If our spiritual eye-sight has been opened to

look on things eternal,—to see their real value ;—the vain and paltry things of this world will possess little attraction in our estimation, in comparison with that glory which we look for at the appearing of our Lord. Yet the faithful reproof which the Apostle administers, is but too applicable to us. "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." What sacrifices have we made, or are we ready to make, for our eternal interests? Our salvation is not so dear to us as it ought to be. All wish to get to heaven, if it can be accomplished without much self-denial and labour ;—if it can be done easily and leisurely ! Ah ! let us remember, that if the Christian's course is strife and warfare, we must expect pain, and weariness, and hard blows too. "Endure hardship," says the Apostle to Timothy, his son in the faith, "as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

"From strength to strength go on,
Wrestle and fight and pray,
Tread all the powers of darkness down,
And win the well-fought day."

Oh, let us do this. Let us be constant and persevering in the conflict. What will be the joy of the faithful soldier, when the final victory is won !

It has pleased our Heavenly Father in his wisdom, to allow the root of sin to remain in believing hearts, until the time of final deliverance. One object of it is clear to me: it is to keep them humble, and to keep them in constant exercise and activity. Feeling this

lot of humiliation,—this body of sin,—daily cleaving to us, let us value the more that blood, in which we can wash and be clean. He that avails himself of this privilege, humbly trusting in the perfect merits of Christ, and going to Him for spiritual cleansing and sanctification, is a growing believer. The likeness of his Heavenly Master will become prominent in his character. Christianity demands a man's whole mind, his undivided affections, his most intense application: and if we desire to become holy and righteous, let us lay aside sin altogether. It is far better to suffer a little now, than to be cast away for ever. It is said of the Israelites,—as they were journeying through the dreadful desert from mount Hor, north of the Red Sea;—that the souls of the people were much discouraged because of the way. But if we are tempted to get weary; let us cheer our spirits by the prospect so near before us—of the promised land—the rest in the Father's house; when the bands of sin shall be burst asunder; when the very root of it shall be destroyed; when imperfection shall cease; and full perfection and glory be at last attained.

"Still let the Spirit cry,
In all believers, 'Come!'
Till Christ the Lord descend from high,
And take the conqueror home!"

THE CREATION GROANING AFTER DELIVERANCE.

Romans viii. 19—23.

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

We find the Apostle here engaged in an important calculation, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." He was contemplating a subject, which has engaged the serious attention of many thinking men;—the sufferings of humanity in this world. The wisest philosophers had not succeeded in solving the question in a satisfactory manner,—why the human family was subject to trials and sorrows of every description? Now the Apostle had the advantage of considering this mysterious subject, not by itself, but in connexion

with the future world; and therefore he came to a right conclusion. He compared present suffering with future glory. The one has a close bearing upon the other. In the case of God's people, trials help to glory. They prepare mind and heart for it.

How well would it be!—how peacefully would Christians bear their cross and journey onward through life!—if they learned to calculate with the Apostle, upon the surest grounds, what a glorious gain is the result of patiently bearing those ills, which we meet with in our way!—"I *reckon* that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

After making this cheering statement, which may well animate the suffering church, and prompt believers to lift up their hearts to heaven, from which their redemption is drawing nigh; the Apostle enters upon a more particular consideration of the state of bondage and suffering, to which the whole visible creation has been subjected for a time; which state however, is not to last for ever. He assures us, that a great and glorious change is at hand,—a change, in which, as we shall presently see, the whole creation is to have its share. There is clearly a reference here, not only to the millennial state, but to that final consummation, when a new heaven and a new earth will be created, in which dwelleth righteousness.

We are doubtless on the eve of great changes in the political and religious institutions of Europe. One ominous event,—one revolutionary up-heaving af-

ter another, makes every thinking man feel that a crisis is coming, such as the world has scarcely witnessed before. And this crisis will have a most important bearing upon the fuller development of the great designs of God relative to his kingdom. In fact it will be followed by the coming of the Lord.

Such being the case, I am fully agreed with those faithful ministers who believe, that in order to direct the minds of Christians to that great event,—we should frequently bring it forward in our preaching.

The words I have selected for our present consideration, have a peculiar bearing on the second advent of Christ. They are therefore particularly applicable to our times. The Apostle declares a remarkable fact:—"The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." A great change is about to take place with the whole creation around us. There is a longing expectation, an ardent desire for it,—to be witnessed every where. The great destiny for which a gracious Creator had intended his creatures, is not realised in the present course of things; because they are not in that position in which they first were. God made every thing good. All was perfect. Whereas now, imperfection is written on every thing created. At first every part of the visible creation moved in harmony with the Divine will: whereas now, every thing seems to have turned out of its proper course. The whole world is longing for a better state, for a restoration of felicity, a return to

primeval happiness. How the nations of Europe are toiling and longing and panting towards it! But things get worse and worse. A paradise state is further off then ever: for people do not understand the plans of the Almighty, nor the signs of the times; because they know not the Scriptures. That time will not be ushered in—until the *manifestation of the sons of God*,—the coming of Christ. "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." Therefore those who wait—who prepare for this great event—and who labour to make others ready for it,—who are in daily expectation of it —may be compared to the wise man who built his house upon a rock.

The Apostle next states, that "the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who subjected the same in hope." This is the reason why the creature does not satisfy,—why its possession and enjoyment bring trouble and vexation, and not peace. How true is this expression! That which was made to last for ever, has become subject to death, decay, corruption. This brings us back to the fall. By the curse pronounced upon man,—"Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return,"—the creation around, in all its perfection, came to be no longer suited to the fallen being, deteriorated through sin; and therefore God subjected it to vanity, decay, corruption. The whole creature sunk down with man, when he was perverted. It shared the same fate. God decreed it so, for a wise

and gracious purpose: for, had man remained an immortal being after the fall, he would have become like Satan; or had the creation, over which he was to have dominion, maintained its original excellence, it would have been entirely unsuited for his use. Things would have been out of their proportions. No longing desire after a better and abiding state would have had a place in man, to prompt him to seek those things which are above. But now, seeing that all is vanity under the sun,—that the most innocent enjoyments are short-lived,—and the most precious good, subject to decay, and productive of pain and trouble,—why a sober reflection must lead to the conviction;—"This is a very poor life; I do not, with all my anxiety and cares, obtain what I want: where shall I find substantial good, a dwelling and possession to make me peaceful, and satisfy my inmost wants. ?"

How truly does this passage explain the present state of the creation, in connection with the entrance of sin into the world! All we see around us, became subject to vanity. Every thing seems perverted from its intended use. The animal creation has become subject to pain and death, through man's sin. How the very beasts of burden groan and are made to suffer by his cruelty! Again; the gifts of nature, the fruits of the earth, are abused and wasted by his luxury, intemperance and prodigality: while the poor, deprived of the common necessaries of life, are suffering in want and penury. The bowels of the earth are ransacked for metals, from which arms are forged for public and

private murder and revenge, or to gratify man's avarice. What a rush after gold there is in the earth!—as if a bag full of the glittering dust could satisfy all man's wants. Every thing in fact, is in an unnatural state. That which God made good, has become evil through man's wickedness. Is this state of things to continue for ever? By no means. It will come to an end: and a time is appointed for its termination. It is allowed at present for a wise purpose. It is the time of preparation,—the time of trial. Gold can only be purified by fire. The creature now in a state of bondage will be delivered at last: and then, peace and righteousness will flourish in the earth. Though subject to corruption, it will resume its former perfect state. The curse will be taken away: and in every part, it will be made to answer the end of its creation.

This great deliverance will take place at the same period, when the glorious liberty of the children of God is to be ushered in. Man by his fall drew the whole creation after him into the sink of corruption. He became a sinner who had lost all; and earth's domain, allotted to him, was thrown into a kind of bondage, a service of vanity and corruption. When the great emancipation takes place, it will receive its full share of glory and happiness.

Now this is a remarkable fact, that nature from the beginning, has shared with man in his good and evil days,—in his paradisaical happiness; and in his fallen, low and captive state;—yea in his very destruction, when the wickedness of man was so great as to cry to

heaven. How peaceful and serene, how harmonious and lovely was the scene, in which we find the human family in Eden! What a beautiful creation it was! Man loving and praising his Maker,—every thought and wish in unison with the will and mind of his God. Man walked before Him; and in Him enjoyed His visible works. Every rivulet, every flower of the field, every portion of the animate creation, seemed to share in man's feelings of joy and praise. "The morning stars did sing; and the sons of God shouted for joy." What a striking contrast to this, we see in the following ages, when all flesh had corrupted His way, and God, in consequence, destroyed man with the earth! So, when the wickedness of the people of Sodom was great, and not ten righteous men were found; the cities of the plain with their inhabitants, were overwhelmed in one common overthrow; and one of the loveliest regions was converted into a dreary desert and a dead sea. And because man is depraved, and has forsaken the path of righteousness, the creation to this day is in a suffering condition. How strikingly is this described by the Apostle in the 22nd verse; "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." When the dark waves of the deluge were rising, and growing bigger every hour, lashing the sides of the hills and overwhelming the dwellings of fallen man; was not the earth with the fulness thereof, the very picture of this statement of the Apostle? When too the earth opened and swallowed up the rebellious band of Korah, Dathan and Abiram;

and when the ground heaved in the valley of Sittim, and bituminous streams gushed forth the from its bowels; and when the clouds poured forth a shower of fire and brimstone upon the devoted city of Sodom;—was it not like a groaning of the creation under the curse! When large armies are marshalled in battle-array, man against his fellow, each bent upon slaying his adversary; when thousands of the engines of war are vomiting forth their deadly missiles; and when, on the sanguinary slaughter being over, the shout of victory is intermingled with the cries and groans of the dying and wounded, lying on the ground in agonies;—is there not then literally fulfilled, what the Apostle says in my text, "The creation groaneth and travaileth in pain?" Ah! the world is indeed in pangs and pains, like a woman in child-birth. This is a very expressive simile; because it is altogether applicable to the present suffering state of the whole creation, and it points forward to a day of deliverance and joy which is at hand. The creation groaning and agonizing as it is in labour, clearly shows,—that eventually, with the last struggle, a birth, worth all the anguish, shall take place. Yes! *A new heaven* and *a new earth* shall be born; and again the sons of God shout for joy. The heaven and earth that now are, must pass away; but a perfect heaven and earth shall come forth out of the great conflagration. This is what we must look forward to. In treating of this sublime subject, the Apostle has two subjects or parties in view. The creation is one: but man is another, who, in one sense,

stands above the creation; and, as far as he is a regenerated believer, is united spiritually with God. That which the creation is groaning after,—viz. the birth into a new existence without suffering;—the believer, as a new born being, has in part obtained. Yet, in as far as he is still in the flesh, he too forms part of the creation yet in bondage. (2. Cor. v. 4.) In a spiritual view, he has the new Divine life; he is of God: but as regards this body of sin, he has still to bear all the ills and pangs and trials to which the creature is subject.

This I believe is implied in the following verse;—"And not only they, (i. e. the creatures around us,) but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

There is a mutual sympathy between both parties,—the creation and man; because they belong to each other. Both sigh and long after deliverance and redemption. The renewed soul is united with God. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Yet this new divine principle is as yet deposited in a tabernacle of clay. Like the pure spotless pearl, it is encased in a rough unseemly shell. This is not only an imperfect, but an unnatural condition, at least contrary to the new divine nature. But so it is; and so it will be; until the Lord come. *We who have the first fruits of the Spirit!*—There is a great difference between these, and the others who have it not. The

being devoid of this precious gift, shows they still belong to the corrupt, unrenewed portion of the creation.

They who have the first fruits, are the peculiar people; who, by the renewing of the mind, have become partakers of a divine life and nature. This is an unspeakable privilege. Such a one is a son of God: he can speak with Him face to face, as Moses did on the mount. He is assured of being such a one, because he loves God and the brethren: and this fruit of faith is a sure pledge to him, that he is an heir of heaven. Ah, brethren! to know this of a certainty!—to have Christ to be one with us! —This gives peace and hope. "It does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, when he shall appear, we shall be like him." Yet even in this favoured position, "we groan within ourselves." Hope, expectation,—even under a sense of certainty that we shall obtain what we look for,—is painful; and painful especially because this mortal part, this body, is still a body of sin: it still bears all the marks of the fall about it. A conflict is therefore daily to be maintained against sinful propensities. Suffering and sorrow are the body's inherent portion. Here we are living, moving, groaning, as part of the creation still in a measure suffering under the curse. Oh, when will the day come?—the day of liberty, freedom from sin and sorrow?—Come soon, Lord Jesus!

But with all his trials, sufferings and groans; how much more highly honoured is that servant, who is waiting,—who is standing at the door, expecting hourly

his Master's return,—than that unfaithful one who saith, "My Lord delayeth his coming;" and begins to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken! The *adoption* for which the people of God are waiting, is their public admission into the family of God, and to the enjoyment of their inheritance, at that season when their bodies—sown corruptible—shall rise incorruptible, immortal and glorious from the grave. When the first fruits of the field are coming in; it is a sure sign that the harvest is near. So we have a harvest in view, in which the angels shall be engaged as reapers, when the command shall be issued, "Thrust in thy sickle, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." These ministering spirits will gather God's faithful people from all the quarters of the earth; and they will rejoice, as they joy in the reaping field, when they shall be presented as ripe sheaves before the Lord of the harvest.

Forasmuch then, as the whole creation is in a longing state for a better and more perfect era; and, with the progress of time, approaching nearer to it; I would say,—Do not you, as the most distinguished part of it,—do not you remain behind. Seek and strive to fulfil the great end of your destiny, and to secure for yourselves, what a bright future is holding out to your hopeful expectations. Our age is in every respect one of progress. Improvement in arts and sciences,—in all that tends to the temporal comfort and happiness of the human race,—is the order of the day in the civilized world. Thousands of heads and hands

are engaged in this work. I thank God that his faithful people appreciate the signs of the times, and are more in earnest,—I trust more united and more zealous and diligent,—in doing their Master's business. Christians, whose eyes are open,—who love their Lord, and wait for his coming,—seem to be every where impressed with the truth of the Apostle's saying: "The time is short." They hear as it were their Lord calling to them from heaven, "Work while it is day; for the night cometh, when no man can work."—Oh, brethren, I say again—do not you remain behind. Depend upon it, this is the right feeling and the real principle which should animate the followers of Christ. Do present to yourselves sometimes the scene here pointed out by the Apostle—the manifestation of the sons of God;—the grand festive triumphant day of the church glorified;—when the great Head will publicly recognize and acknowledge his own, before assembled worlds. This is no fancy of the imagination,—no poetic figure or phrase. It will be a historic reality. Poor creatures as we are, under the powerful influence of habit, bound down in mind and heart to the comparatively insignificant affairs of this short existence, how we allow ourselves to be deluded and turned aside from the great end of our existence! Do not try to persuade yourselves that things will remain as they are. Is not the fashion of the world changing every day before our eyes? Do not think good and evil will remain mixed up as they are now. Realize the truth, that the same Jesus, of whom

you read in the gospel,—writing down on every letter and document the amount of years since he was born at Bethlehem,—who died for ourselves on Calvary;—will,—in a certain determined year and day,—appear from heaven; and all eyes shall see Him.

The waiting position is that which becomes a servant, when the master is from home. That is a bad servant, who, during his absence, lies down to sleep; or busies himself about trifles, and allows his property to be wasted. Our proper place is at the gate of the house—looking out with a watchful eye—ever ready to receive our Master.

Again; since you perceive in the whole creation around you a state of bondage—an irresistible tendency towards decay, wasting and death;—and if you perceive these humiliating marks in your own mortal part—weakness, weariness, sickness, a slow but sure progress towards the grave and dissolution; remember that God has appointed it so. He has his wise reasons for it; and know to your comfort, that God has deposited in this body, the germ of an imperishable life; and as in this body, so in the whole creation there is implanted a germ of a new existence. When its terrestrial course is run, it will be dissolved: but it will rise again, in eternal, unfading freshness and beauty. We meet with many promises regarding this renewal of the earth.

You have heard of the groans of the creation,—its pangs and labour and bondage; and how it will finally have its share in the glorious liberty of the

sons of God. You have heard, how for six thousand years the world has been resounding with these groans. What then is your feeling,—your desire? I cannot understand those people, who have no sympathy in these pangs and woes,—who appear to be deaf to these cries of sorrow;—who sit at ease and see no necessity of looking for, and preparing for, that better home,—that grand consummation, the manifestation of the sons of God. They seem to fancy, that they form an exception from others,—as if their mortal part were made of different materials. Ah! it is because there is no life and no light in them. They resemble those solid inorganic parts of the creation, the rocks; which stand immovable. Neither the groans and wailings of creation, nor the sweet touching notes of promise, can impress them. And so they stand;—until the great conflagration of the world melt them down.

Of one thing, I feel sure, my brethren. The more the new life of Christ has been developed in the soul, the more ardent will be the desire for the great day of the Lord,—the more sensibly will the soul feel His absence,—and groan under the feeling of sin; "Oh that I had the wings of a dove! for then would I flee away and be at rest." Oh, let us rise above the fallen creation;—cherish the faith and hope set before us;—and pray, that soon we may be instated in our inheritance, which is reserved for us in heaven.

WHAT AFFLICTIONS WILL EFFECT.

2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen, are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal.

In these striking words the Apostle sets before us the practical use of trials. From my early childhood I have frequently been led to reflect on this solemn subject. In the year 1812, I saw a portion of that fine army marching to Russia, which a few months after perished by the sword and in the snows of that northern clime. A few years after, during a dreadful famine, I saw human beings walking about, wasted to skeletons. When we witness such and other scenes of human suffering in this world, the question naturally presents itself,—what can be the reason and object of these trials? It is indeed desirable, that we should, if possible, ascertain what a Divine Providence could have intended in allowing, and sending, all the innumerable shapes of mortal suffering. They are the common lot of mankind. The good and the bad are outwardly visited by them. Philosophy without religion, is quite insufficient to account for these mysterious dispensations. But Christian philosophy

derived from revelation, gives a most satisfactory answer. Thereby we are informed, that afflictions have a reference to a state hereafter; and that by them the mind under Divine teaching, is prepared for unmixed and eternal happiness.

The truth of this may be generally acknowledged in a manner; but a person must be divinely taught, to appreciate and feel its practical import. If the cup of affliction is not mingled with grace;—if the heart is not prepared, softened, humbled by the Heavenly Teacher himself; it will stubbornly murmur at His ways, and resist the means of humiliation, and refuse the bitter remedies sent for its eternal good. And what is then the effect? It is this;—that people are more hardened in their unbelief and selfishness. Even good and holy men were tempted to repine in the hour of deep trial. Jeremiah cursed the day in which he was born. Asaph asked in doubt,—"Has God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" But the great Apostle viewed a frowning providence in the fuller light of Gospel grace, and discovered a fact which cheered his heart. It was this;—that afflictions were opening the way to exceeding glory. Was there ever a man more tried, more persecuted, called to more severe sacrifices? I believe not. Yet he could *glory in tribulation*. May we learn a valuable lesson from his inspired declaration in the text, the Lord being our Teacher.

Considering what this world is,—a scene of daily trials;—he certainly is the wise man, who has discov-

ered the means by which his trials can be turned into a blessing.

We consider—

I. THE BLESSED EFFECT OF AFFLICTION IN BELIEVERS.

II. UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES IT IS THUS TURNED INTO A BLESSING.

I. *The blessed effect of affliction in believers.* The Apostle significantly says, "*our* affliction;"—showing that trials are the common inheritance of man. They do indeed belong to us. They are so closely and intimately interwoven with the events of this life, as to form a considerable portion of every man's history. No sooner is he born into this world, than his sufferings and trials begin; and under agonies and convulsions, which shake the stoutest frame, the soul is severed from its frail companion, and leaves this world of sin and suffering. Sin is the reason of all this. Sin has brought suffering into this world. In paradise, our first parents felt no pain in the body, nor sorrow in mind; because they were pure and holy. But no sooner had they tasted of the forbidden fruit, than fear and dread filled their minds, and their bodies became susceptible of pain and disease, and subject to death. Ever since sin entered, the world has presented a scene of suffering: "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now." Yes! and eternal sorrow and misery would have been the portion of mankind, but for the interposition of eternal mercy. It is a most striking and wonderful

proof of God's wisdom and love, that those very evils and sufferings, under which the human family is labouring, are, in the ways of His gracious providence, made instrumental in effecting our recovery, and advancing our eternal interests.

"Our affliction!" The Apostle seems here likewise to distinguish between the trials of the believer and those of unbelievers. They stand in very different positions, and are affected in a very different manner, under their sufferings. When John Bunyan, that holy man, was imprisoned for preaching the Gospel; he could regard his affliction in a very different light, from that in which the thieves and other bad characters viewed it, who were confined within the same walls. The fact is this. While the sinner whose conscience accuses him, must view his sufferings as a just punishment for sin, and has no sacred consolation to sooth his feeling; the Christian in trial, is never without comfort,—never without hope. Hence the Apostle terms the affliction of believers,—"our light affliction!" Yes! my brethren, there is a marked difference between the Christian and the unbeliever, in affliction. The former has not that fearful load of guilt and self-accusation to bear, which bows down and distracts the latter. When the ungodly man is in trouble, the remembrance of sin adds increasing weight to the trial. The consciousness that the affliction is the result of his own conduct, renders it incomparably more heavy. The sinner remembers the broken law of the Almighty; perhaps

views His frowning countenance; and what is more awful still,—he knows, that what he suffers now, is only the forerunner of endless sufferings, which await the unrighteous hereafter.

It is not so with the believer. His affliction is *light;* because he knows, that his sins are forgiven. He may be conscious, and frequently is conscious, of unfaithfulness; but this prompts him to seek his God. In the most trying hour; he derives relief from prayer. He knows that his suffering is not a punishment sent in wrath; but a paternal chastisement, sent in infinite mercy for his good. Therefore his affliction is *light*,—tolerable—easy to be borne; for there is one who bears it with him;—a kind sympathizing Friend, who knows what temptations and suffering are; for he was tried to the utmost himself. Oh brethren, to have the comfort of his presence and divine support, in those moments when we most feel our weakness and frailty! This proves the blessed condition of his people.

Again; the Apostle calls the affliction of the Christian, *momentary;* "This light affliction, *which is but for a moment.*" This is a simple fact, considered in itself. What is mortal life? It is but a point, a moment. In the most trying situation, it is but the momentary *now*, which you feel. The past is gone; and the minute which is to come, is out of our reach. But the longest, the most aggravated and protracted trials are momentary indeed, when compared with eternity,—when compared with the fire of hell that shall never be

quenched, and the worm which dieth not. On the gates of hell you may read the words "*without hope.*"* Oh, brethren, when we think of that dreadful state, and the millions of wretched souls, who have been consigned to it; then we can indeed say with truth, that this life's sufferings are light and momentary. For we shall soon have done with them; and when the last fire of affliction is burned out, nothing remains but the grateful remembrance of its intense heat, and of our deliverance from the furnace.

But now the Apostle proceeds to the main point, in declaring,—"*Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*" And here, allow me to point out to you, the contrasts in this beautiful sentence. No orator has ever put together more striking parallels than you find here;—affliction—glory: light affliction —weight of glory: light and momentary affliction —eternal weight of glory! The inspired Apostle's mind was evidently enraptured by the greatness of the subject; and really, my brethren, if we give a solemn consideration to it, it cannot but produce similar feelings in our own minds.

Heavenly glory which will never end! The very thought is great and sublime, beyond our conception. We cannot grasp it, because our minds are accustomed only to these low, terrestrial scenes. But the very comparison shows, that heaven must be a happy place

* "Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch'entrate." "All hope abandon, ye who enter here." Dante, Inferno, iii.

indeed, where such glories are to be revealed and vouchsafed to the chosen, faithful people of God. To dwell in his presence, to be surrounded by saints, to be no more tempted—no more pained; yea! to be no longer in a condition to suffer, or be tempted;—to pass eternity in employments which will completely suit the state and wants of our immortal souls, and from which we derive constant and increasing delight! This indeed is to be in glory.

Now the Apostle makes this remarkable declaration,—that our affliction *works out this glory*. This is a wonderful process. It is desirable indeed, that we should clearly understand it: for it solves one of the greatest mysteries in our existence here. Affliction, that bitter and unwelcome thing, is working out a change in the soul, which renders the believer fit for heaven! Yes, it mortifies his pride; it cuts at the root of his selfishness; it brings him to his true level; it humbles the soul in repentance before God; it renders it tender, meek, susceptible of good impressions. The heart thus softened, begins to hunger after grace, receives the impress of the Saviour's image. Oh, how wonderful the power and influence of sharp trials! How many have come out from this fire refined; who, in days of prosperity would know nothing of religion, and cared nothing for it! And in proportion to the mass and rust of worldliness and pride, which have gathered round the sinner's heart and hardened it; the furnace is made hotter and hotter. When the first blast of affliction is not sufficient to effect the gracious pur-

pose, a more powerful and cutting affliction will ere long be sent. The rod is again made ready; and the strokes are sent home nearer to the heart. But trials of themselves cannot soften,—cannot bring a sinner to repentance: they must be sanctified by grace. The most severe afflictions cannot bring man back to God. Look at the Jewish nation. See how they were visited for their sins. Yet they remained stubborn, and the prophet complained: "Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint."

But affliction is not only intended to bring us to God. It has likewise the object to keep us near to him. Our inward corruptions are so great,—our disposition to wander from the fold of Christ, and to pursue our own ways, is so deeply rooted;—that we need the chastening rod again and again. Oh! what a long process of humiliation is required, to bring the converted soul into a state of real humility, and submission to the will of God! Our plans are crossed; our hopes frustrated; our way is fenced up with thorns; we are made to feel, that this is not our rest, but a vale of tears.

Such are the ways of God with his children: and happy is their lot, if such a gracious end is obtained. What Christian will regret having passed through heavy trials,—if they end at last in eternal glory; and if these bitter remedies have been instrumental in purifying his soul?

11. We briefly notice *under what circumstances*

trials are made a blessing to the Christian. The Apostle has added a word which considerably qualifies his former assertion, and which is to serve as a caution to many, who hope they are on the way to heaven. It is only *under certain conditions*, that affliction will work out for us an eternal weight of glory. And who are the privileged people in whom this blessed end is effected? Here they are described;—those who "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." How beautiful! how practical is this expression! The Christian's desire is heaven;—his great objects of attention, things not seen. The aim of all others is this world;—their all,—the things that are seen. Here is all the difference:—here, in the secret motives and workings of the heart, is the hidden cause, why affliction helps the one to heaven, and hardens the other, to be fit only for hell and final obduracy. And then, they see another difference in these things, besides their being visible and invisible. "The things seen are *temporal*." They indeed take up the heads, and minds, and hearts of most people. They are deemed the means of happiness. But what are they in reality? Very poor and insufficient indeed. They are only intended for the body and natural life. They can never raise and exalt the mind, or convert the soul, and make it wiser and better. The things seen are uncertain. No one can tell, how long a man and his possessions shall continue together:—when he shall be taken away from all he has; and all he has, be taken from him. The great

and the rich often sink down to poverty and obscurity. In the course of a few years, the same person is the general envy, and the object of compassion. There needs nothing more than a tempest at sea, a dreadful fire, or a great bankruptcy,—to overturn the pile and fabric of the wealth and opulence of hundreds. Things seen are temporal. They are but for a time, and a very short time. The revolution of a few years exhausts them. Even the lawful objects of a subordinate affection and love, whence a great share of our earthly comfort is enjoyed, are not less uncertain. A pleasant child, an affectionate wife or husband, a warm and steadfast friend, as Jonathan to David:—all these things are but like beauteous flowers in the garden. They soon fade: they wither, and they are not.

How sadly mistaken then are they, who look at these things only:—whose sole aim in life is confined to the acquisition and enjoyment of these! Such is the folly of the world. Their hearts are wholly taken up with visible things; and an invisible heaven, in all its promises, is forfeited and lost.

But what is it to look at things which are not seen? It is to aim at the things which belong to another world:—at God and his Christ,—the redemption which a Saviour has obtained,—the spiritual blessings he bestows,—and the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." To aspire after these, is indeed worth our best efforts. The things unseen, are high and noble; such as angels and the whole company of heaven contemplate. They enlarge and purify the mind.

They inspire purposes and intentions, grand, and pleasing to God; transforming our souls from earthly to heavenly. They are rich and enriching beyond expression. All who possess them, confess and acknowledge this. By the contemplation and influence of things unseen; the conscience is purified, the mind is set at rest, the heart is filled with joy. So full the contentment,—that our Saviour, commending the choice of Christians, says—"*He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst!*"

Things not seen, if once your own, are so for ever. They are above this world's whirling sphere, in the hand of God: and, like Him, unchangeable. They are His gifts, kept by His power—reserved for His people. They are secured "by oaths and promises and blood." Whether we are caressed in the circle of our friends, or despised and slandered by our foes;—whether we bloom in health, or languish and decay;—whether we abound or are in want;—*this* treasure is ever the same.

All temporal advantages add not the weight of a grain to it; and the fiercest attacks on our character or substance cannot diminish it.

My brethren, we are in the habit of esteeming those fortunate and happy, who have tasted the smallest portion of this life's troubles and sorrows,—whose vessel is gliding down the stream smoothly upon the unruffled waters,—"hope at the prow and pleasure at the helm:"—but from the Apostle's declaration it would appear, that it is not so. On the contrary, we read,

that to be in earthly prosperity, may sometimes be regarded as a mark of the Divine displeasure. It is said of some such ;—" They have more than heart could wish ;" but " Thou didst set them in slippery places: Thou castedst them down into destruction." (Ps. lxxiii. 7, 18.) Whereas, on the other hand, heavy and repeated trials are often described as a mark of the Divine favour: " Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth." This being the case; I would much rather go bowed down and in heaviness through life's journey, if only the end be glorious, and I finish my course in heavenly joy; than be at ease, and enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; but be cast away in the the end, from God's presence into the outer darkness.

We have, my brethren, all of us, had our greater or less share of affliction in days past: and certain it is, that greater trials may yet be in store for some of us. How desirable is it then, that you and I learn a practical lesson from the striking declaration of St. Paul! How important, that we look on passing events with a mind full of heavenly sensibility, and with an eye divinely enlightened!

The hope of better days supports many in the hour of affliction. " A better time is coming,"—say they. Time is the healer of every ill we endure. So say many; but it is not so. It does not cure the *root* from which all our sufferings spring. We need a Saviour's grace to soothe our sorrows, and sanctify our trials. Our Heavenly Father sends them, to change,—to soften us; to work a new heart; to bring us to the

Saviour's cross; and to prepare us for heaven. To obtain this end, we must pray, and continue in prayer. If our sufferings have not had this effect, if they have not given us a lift from earth, raised our hearts to God, and have not prompted us to bend our knees; they will, with so many other privileges, only add to our responsibility. That field "which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned." Man is a very perverse being. He quarrels with his Maker. He resists his calls. He defies his authority. Yet he must know from one day's illness, that that long-suffering God could, if he pleased, crush him into dust. But this is His will, that we all prepare for glory. Oh, let us be wise, and keep heaven in view. Off with the eye—away with the heart,—from temporal things. They will not suffice: they cannot satisfy the soul, created for God and heaven. Look to better things. Aim at Heaven itself. O ETERNITY! boundless ocean! exhaustless thought! God help us to prepare for it!—to make a wise provision for it. If we feel his chastening rod; let us ask for grace to submit to his hand, and that a present as well as an eternal blessing may be the result derived from it. A Christian tried and proved by many an affliction, humble and holy and heavenly-minded, is a rare sight,—an object of admiration to angels, the joy of heaven. He longs for his eternal home. Look how St. Paul rejoiced in the prospect. O brethren, may we thus be prepared, and daily more ripen for eternal glory! How shall we praise our

Divine Purifier, when we shall see, that the sufferings of this life were turned into the greatest blessings, by fitting our souls for the endless fruition of heavenly glory!

THE PATIENCE OF THE HUSBANDMAN.

James v. 7, 8.

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

THIS paternal and affectionate exhortation from an aged and experienced Apostle, was in its proper place, considering the circumstances under which it was given. The tares of worldliness and much moral evil, were abundantly springing up in the Churches, in the latter days of the Apostles. The love, purity and simplicity, which had been shining so brightly in the lives of Christians in the earlier years of the Apostolic era, gradually lost their lustre; and, as the stream of the Church moved onward, its transparent waters were discoloured by the soil which it fertilized. There is a tendency towards spiritual declension and decay, with Churches at large, as with individuals. We may presume, that the Churches at first formed,—from the day of the pentecostal out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, and in succeeding years,—consisted, with few exceptions, of true believers in Christ. The second generation which succeeded, was of a more mixed

character; and when the affections grow cold, religion will languish, and become formal; and in such a state, a lax system of religion, and erroneous doctrines, are readily received and adopted.

Christians in those days were moreover afflicted from without. This chapter shows, that they suffered oppression from the rich and powerful. So the Apostle perceived danger of spiritual declension, both from within, and from the tyrannical treatment of the wealthy, which disheartened and bowed down the poor. He found it therefore needful, to warn them against the two main hindrances to the advancement of the Christian life;—pride and worldliness on the one hand; and impatience and despondency on the other.

And do we not, my Christian hearers, stand in need of the same exhortation? Indeed we do. Those who know what spiritual life,—the life of the soul—signifies; those who have put on the armour of God, and have been engaged in the conflict:—these know well, that the same hostile elements are encountered now, which the primitive Christians had to struggle against. In the best state, we are either too much at our ease,—not serious, not earnest enough: or we grow weary and diffident, and despair about final success.

May the Lord give us his blessing, while our attention is directed to this declaration. It exhibits—

I. An Apostolic exhortation.

II. A striking illustration.

III. The great motive.

I. *An Apostolic exhortation:* "Be patient, bre-

thren, unto the coming of the Lord." Patience signifies the quiet, resigned, submissive endurance of sufferings and crosses. It is the lamb-like, gentle, unruffled disposition, of which Christ, as the Son of Man, showed such a perfect example. "As the sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself unto him that judgeth righteously." This was patience to perfection. When he might have prayed his Father, to give him more than twelve legions of angels, to deliver him from the rabble who laid violent hands on him; he did not: but in order that the Scriptures concerning himself might be fulfilled, he suffered himself to be handled like a thief and a murderer—to be smitten in the face, and spat upon and scourged and mocked; and hanged up, to die on a tree! This was patience more than human. It was truly divine.

And this same JESUS now sends us by his holy apostle the solemn exhortation,—"Brethren, be patient."

You see that "patience" has always a reference to a suffering condition. When human help fails; when our own resources are drying up; when the staff of support on which we lean, is breaking; when things go contrary to our wishes; when creature comforts are withdrawn; when one sad messenger after another is announcing disaster—losses by fire, by water, by robbers, by death;—such as Job experienced, when he tore

his garments and sat down on a heap of ashes :—It is in such circumstances, that we want a word of comfort: not harsh sentences of reproof,—such as Job's friends thought fit to administer to the afflicted sufferer,—but something of a gentle, kind, sympathizing, soothing character;—in the spirit of our Saviour, when he said to the widow at Nain, "Weep not;" and to Mary, "Thy brother shall rise again:"—or, like the words of my text,—"Brethren, be patient unto the coming of the Lord." The believer needs this grace especially, when the mind bears a large share in the trial. I conceive that our Saviour suffered much more intensely in his soul, than in his body. In Gethsemane, His sufferings were chiefly mental. The load of the sins of a fallen world was laid upon him, and overwhelmed his soul. No human tongue can express the intensity of his pangs and agonies, when his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground, and he cried,—"Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Mental sufferings are far more acute than bodily! But we all know, how closely they are connected. These two companions, the body and soul, are so closely joined in mutual interests; that when the body is affected, the mind suffers with it; and when the first is reduced and feeble, the other loses its tone and energy.

Often it is asked—Why is there so much suffering in the world? Why? Because there is so much sin. There would be no suffering, if there were no sin. But this very

suffering is, in the hand of a wise Providence, becoming the means of putting down or destroying sin; and hereby, believers are being *conformed to the likeness of Christ.* A pure mind and a clean heart are attained, through the process of suffering. When, therefore, the Lord is leading the soul into the wilderness; when he begins the process of removing the objects of joy and pleasure,—extinguishing comforts; when the spirit feels dry, deserted, poured out like water:—then is the time to go to the Word of God: and, be assured, nothing but divine consolation will afford substantial relief.

In the day of sorrow and affliction; friends, relations, neighbours, are sometimes heard to say to the poor sufferer—"You must be patient, and keep up your spirits." Ah! this is all well meant; but it is poor consolation. They might as well call upon a drowning man to keep up, at the moment when his last strength is spent, and he is sinking—going to the bottom. Rather give him something to hold by—to enable him to reach the dry solid ground; and he will understand that the words contain substantial consolation. My brethren, the Word of God does not merely administer the dry threadbare exhortation—"Be patient;" but it affords you solid ground to rest upon. It is the gentle, affectionate call of Him, who knows what we can bear; and what we cannot. See what the Apostle says at the 11th verse, after alluding to the patience of Job and the end of the Lord:—"The Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy."

The Apostle gives the believer a firm resting place,—a cheering prospect,—in adding,—"*Be patient unto the coming of the Lord.*" In the deepest suffering, a view of that great event—I mean a believing, clear view of the presence of Christ,—inspires the soul with hope. It makes all the difference between the man of God and the man of the world. The Church has an aim, an object, a prize before her. Therefore Zion's children in the darkest hours have light and hope. All the dealings of God with his children have a view to that great event,—the coming of the Lord.

But on this, I shall enter more fully ere I conclude.

II. Let me now direct your attention to the *striking illustration of this subject* in the text.—"Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain."

He labours, and fulfils his assigned task; in confident hope, that God will in due time do His own work, and give the expected blessing. His is a laborious task. He has to bear the burden and heat of the day. In the sweat of the brow he eats his bread. Thus he breaks up the fallow ground, and harrows it thoroughly, and clears out the weeds and stones; and then at last the seed is sown. But he does not plough all the year through. No: there is a time for every thing. When the seed is deposited in the ground, he leaves it for a higher hand to watch over it, and make it grow. He waits for the early rain to make it spring up; and for the latter rain to fill the ears with

the ripe corn. And in the course of time, the fertilizing showers do descend more or less abundantly: for God gave the promise after the deluge; "While the earth remaineth; seed time and harvest, cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

See how considerately the husbandman is walking through his fields, examining his rising crops. What thoughts occupy his mind as he surveys the promising fields? Why, he is thinking of the harvest. His interests, his comforts, his existence, his all, depend upon it. He longs to see his labour and toil rewarded. He hopes,—he waits for the precious fruit of the earth: and as the long-expected time draws near; his mind expands with gratitude: and, when he sees the corn waving in the gentle breeze, like the swelling of the rolling tide; and the full ears bending under the load of grain; he feels a great satisfaction and joy; because all his labour is about to meet with its reward.

And as it is in nature, so in grace. The Christian believer, in the daily exercise of faith and patience, looks forward, like the industrious husbandman, to a better day—to the day of harvest. Yes, brethren, all our efforts to do good, all our trials great and small, when endured in the mind and Spirit of Christ, are preparatory for a better state,—are a sowing of good grain for a glorious eternity.

As there is an intimate connection between sowing and harvest;—the one being the cause, the other the effect;—so it is in the kingdom of God on earth.

How clearly and fully has this truth been established by our Saviour, in his striking parables of the *labourers in the vineyard*, of *the tares and the good seed*, and especially in that of *the entrusted talents!* Our preparation for eternity consists, in doing the will of God, and suffering according to his will. And the latter is by far the more difficult of the two lessons which are assigned to us.

An active life, for the glory of God and the good of others, is agreeable to the taste and feelings of a good man; but suffering adversity, ruffles and unhinges the mind. Yet the richest fruits for an eternal world are generally matured in the most trying seasons. There are times when every stay and support are removed. The soul is entirely cast on the Lord. Then the words are realized,—*Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed!* The believer waits in patience. He looks forward; and he looks upward. Sometimes God permits him to have a glance—an insight into His secret operations; and he sees that a harvest is ripening for heaven; and perceives with joy, that the precious fruit has been growing best, when storms were raging and the pelting showers mercilessly drove against his house.

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. This cheering promise must be kept in mind by the parent, who desires to bring up his beloved ones for God and heaven;—by every single individual too, who has the pilgrim's mind, and looks for heaven as his home:—but more especially by ministers, missionaries and

teachers, who are more directly engaged in God's work. The real and full success and reward of labour, which aims at the spiritual good of man, must not be expected, and cannot be fully ascertained here. We must be contented to do what God has commanded, and wait in patience on Him. Ah! we are too apt to get impatient: we wish to see results at once. Some people resemble in their impatience the little child, who, after sowing seed in the garden, went frequently and scraped up the ground to see if it was springing up; and, of course, spoiled it.

On the other hand, there are not wanting those who, in reference to Missionary labour among the heathen, speak as if it were lost labour, as if the seed of the Word were all destroyed. Our Saviour on the contrary, assures his hearers, that some seed will fall into good ground; and it was only in reference to the Jewish Church in a worldly, relapsed, and decaying state, sowing to the flesh,—that the prophet declared, (Hos. viii. 7.) "*They have sown the wind: and they shall reap the whirlwind!*"

We hear it said, that it will require generations to pass, before India can be Christianized. There is too much harping about impossibilities. People calculate from present appearances; and from the results which have hitherto attended the efforts of God's servants; and these are scarcely known to them. It reminds me of the courtier of the king of Israel, in the siege and famine of Samaria; who, when the prophet Elisha foretold, that there should be plenty and abundance

in the city on the following day,—declared ;—" *If the Lord made windows in heaven, might this thing be ?*" And Elisha answered him ; " *Behold ! thou shalt see it with thine eyes :—but shalt not eat thereof.*" And so it was. The Syrians heard a noise, and fled ; and left their camp standing, with abundance of stores and provisions ; and that man who doubted, was crushed in the gate by the crowd. That it is an easy thing for the Lord to cause among nations, a great moral or political change, within a short period ; we have seen in the late political convulsions in Europe. I feel assured, it will be as easy to Him to cause an equally great and moral and religious change among the nations of India, when His hour is come. He needs but to touch one of his secret springs in providence, and the work will be done.

What Christians want, is the waiting, the praying disposition ; the mind of the husbandman, who looks forward to a harvest. He is not idle : no ! he labours to weariness : but he looks up for the needful showers and the divine blessing, to crown his efforts and toil. If this devout waiting upon God, should become more prevalent among Christians in India, we should hail it as a harbinger of happier days ;—as the very beginning of the fulfilment of the promise, the Lord gave to his people by the prophet Joel ;—" Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God ! for He hath given you the former rain moderately ; and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain ; and the latter rain in the first

month: And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil!"

III. *The great motive to patience*:—"for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." In the first place the Apostle said,—"Be patient, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord;"—that is, with a view to it; keeping it always in remembrance. In the second place, he exhibits the great event in a new and striking light—as being near at hand. So the Apostle Paul said, "Brethren, the time is short:" and the aged John;—"Children, it is the last hour." The *coming of the Lord* in many passages points out the judgments which were to break out upon Jerusalem and Judea. In a certain sense, that awful visitation proved a deliverance of God's people from their oppressors. The Jews made their measure of iniquity full, by hindering the progress of the Gospel everywhere. Therefore said the Apostle Paul (1 Thess. ii. 16.) "The wrath is come upon them to the uttermost." And from the time that the visible temple was destroyed, God gave a new enlargement to his Church; and the spiritual temple arose in greater grandeur and beauty:—and in Asia, Europe and Africa, the Gospel was preached, and Christianity was established, among millions of worshippers.

The Church is now expecting, and prayerfully looking out for, the full accomplishment of the promise—"The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." A deeper interest has of late been excited among Christians on this most glorious subject, than has been the case

since the Apostolic ages. The stirring events in Europe,—the activity of Bible and Missionary Societies,—the preaching of the Gospel in every heathen land,—the extensive conversions among the Jews,—the decay of Papacy,—the miserable condition of Rome,—the approaching dissolution of the Turkish empire,—the preparations which are making in Jerusalem—all the signs of our agitated times,—lead us to expect a greater and more momentous crisis in connexion with Christianity, than has ever yet been witnessed. Great and portentous are the shadows, which coming events cast before them; signifying to the waiting believer, and forewarning an unbelieving world, that "*the coming of the Lord is drawing nigh.*" What says our Saviour on this subject? He says, "WATCH"—"BE YE ALSO READY!" *like unto servants waiting for the return of their Lord.* If you love Him in any measure, this will not sound like an idle tale in your ears; but you will make it a point to show, that you appreciate his call, and are preparing in earnest to receive so great a Visitor in a becoming manner,—or rather, to be received by Him with approbation.

Where is the man that does not at times feel weary of the world, and long for freedom from sin, sorrow and pain?—Who is there, that does not, at seasons of depression and toil, join in the pious ejaculation of the Psalmist, "*Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! then would I flee away and be at rest!*" Depend upon it, my brethren, that the believer who has followed the Apostolic advice,—*Establish your hearts;*—who has

placed before his mental vision in clear, well-defined scriptural outlines, the glorious fact of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ,—who longs for it, like the watchman for the breaking of day,—who never loses sight of it,—but returns to it again and again,—who prays for it—with the mind and ardent desire and love of the beloved disciple, when he concluded the sacred volume—"*Come soon, Lord Jesus!*"—I say, that believer is in his right place: he possesses a source of comfort and joy, which will never fail him in the trying hour; and he will stand his ground to the last; for when all the generations of the earth shall wail, because of the Lord coming with clouds, he will have confidence and joy—and not be ashamed before him at his coming. That appearance, so longingly expected, so devoutly prayed for, will be the *turning of his captivity.* His mouth will then be filled with laughter, and his tongue with singing. He will join with the chorus of the blessed in singing—"The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." In tears he sowed the seed; but now, he will indeed reap in joy. Weeping and sad, he often went forth, bearing the precious seed; but now,—oh! what a glorious change!—*he will come again, rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.* God grant, that this may be our happy portion in that great and glorious consummation! Amen!

BEHOLD THY GOD.

Isaiah xl. 9.

O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

We are here for the first time assembled, to engage in the worship of Almighty God.* It is with feelings of satisfaction and gratitude, more than I can express, that by the good hand of our God, I have seen the building of this Church completed, two years and ten months after the foundation-stone was laid in a solemn service. When Jehovah, by his prophet, encouraged a prince of royal blood of the house of David, to finish the building of the second temple at Jerusalem, in times of peculiar distress; He gave him the promise, that mountains of difficulties should be removed by the good providence of God; "*Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.*" How encouraging and delightful must have been this promise to the pious builder, animating him to persevere in the good work! And while the building was drawing to its accomplishment, the Lord continued to cheer his spirit by more encouraging promises:—(Hag. ii. 6—9.)

* This sermon was preached at the opening of the new mission church at Burdwan, Dec. 25th, 1849.

"*Thus saith the Lord of hosts; yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts.*"

And as it was foretold, so it came to pass. Zerubbabel was permitted to bring forth and fit in the corner-stone,—to finish the sacred edifice. And great was the joy, and loud were the shoutings and acclamations, of the pious Jews, when they saw their Zion built again.

And in the fulness of time, the Desire of the nations did come; and greater glory was put upon this second temple, when the incarnate Jehovah sanctified it by his personal presence, than Solomon's temple ever received after his celebrated prayer of consecration.

The festival of the nativity of Christ could not be celebrated in a more suitable manner, than that of sanctifying this house of God, by the first solemn service; and by our reminding each other of the joyful news, *that the Desire of all nations is come:* and that *unto us a Saviour is born.* The minister of the Gospel has received from that blessed event the great theme of his preaching. Although the story is above eighteen hundred years old; it possesses, to the devout Christian, a new interest with the return of every Christmas-day. He rejoices, that the declara-

tion of the angels to the shepherds in that memorable night, is a message to him,—"Unto you a Saviour is born this day in the city of David." And we are persuaded, that the glory of the Lord will be manifested in this house, by the spiritual, real presence of the Lord; whenever the message of Divine love in Jesus Christ shall be proclaimed from this place.

There is a call from the Lord in my text;—a lively and powerful call upon the Church to bestir herself, and bear witness to the world concerning the coming and reign of Christ. It implies the same joyful fact which the angel declared to the shepherds,—that the good tidings of joy shall be "unto all people."

"O Zion, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice: say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!"

We consider from the text—

I. ZION, OR THE CHURCH, A WITNESS FOR CHRIST.

II. THE EXHORTATION TO BEAR A FAITHFUL TESTIMONY.

III. THE MAIN SUBSTANCE OR THEME OF THE TESTIMONY.

May the Spirit from on high visit us on this blessed morning, and lead us with faith and grateful joy to behold our Lord and our God, in him who was born at Bethlehem!

I. *Zion, or the Church,—a witness for Christ.* I need hardly point out to you that Zion, here addressed by a voice from heaven, is the Church of God;—the assembly of true believers—to whom he has revealed himself, and to whom his gracious designs

for the salvation of man, were communicated from the earliest ages. This Church was established, when God made a covenant with Abraham; promising him, in a strange land,—that in his Seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. His descendants,—that highly favoured nation, the Israelites,—whom Jehovah took like an affectionate father by the hand (leading them by Moses from the land of their oppressors, across the Red Sea), received at Sinai, the Divine oracles, for their instruction and guidance. In the dark ages of heathenism,—for fourteen centuries before the birth of the Saviour, when the world was sunk in ignorance, idolatry and barbarism,—there was a nation established in the land of Canaan by the immediate interference of Divine providence, who possessed a higher knowledge in Divine things, than Rome and Greece ever could boast of, in their most enlightened ages. Israel possessed laws and statutes, and a pure Divine worship, before Rome and Athens were even in existence. These laws and that worship possessed the stamp of divinity: and to the fact of their having been revealed from heaven, must be ascribed their intrinsic excellence, and their adaptation to the condition and wants of the people, to whom they were given. As a proof how highly these privileges were prized by the devout and better portion of the Jews; we may refer to Romans ix. 4;—where, Paul expressing his love and earnest desire for the salvation of his brethren, says of them,—"Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the

glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises." The most signal of these privileges were the Divine promises. From time to time, God sent his servants the prophets; giving them, as the great event drew nearer, the most encouraging promises concerning Messiah. Zion being thus, by her temple, and worship, and divine laws, a standing witness for God in the earth; a gracious object was attained, in preparing that nation, and through them a portion of the neighbouring nations, for the reception of the more perfect blessings of the Gospel. But the Church of the Mosaic dispensation, was of a preparatory character in all her economy and arrangements. This joyful and animated address of my text belongs eminently to the dispensation of the Gospel; and has received its full accomplishment in the advent and birth of Christ. Before, that great event, the good things mentioned, could only be spoken of as about to be revealed: but from that blessed night, when angels first proclaimed the Gospel to the shepherds, the blessings of salvation have become a reality. The Church of Christ has from his incarnation, emphatically become and continued to be the bearer of the glad tidings.

II. We proceed to consider *the Divine exhortation to bear a faithful testimony before the world.* The exhortation is couched in the strongest terms;—"O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain;"—that is,—occupy the highest

position,—one which I have assigned to thee,—the place where the glory I have put on thee may best be seen, and where thy voice may best be heard;—that the world may become acquainted with thy real character, and know the great commission I have entrusted to thee. And then the call is repeated. Jerusalem—the city—is appealed to; instead of Zion, the beautiful hill on whose brow the temple stood: perhaps implying that the ministers, who serve in the temple, are not the only individuals charged with conveying the good tidings to the people; for the whole of God's people are under a call to bear their part, and be instrumental in the great work: "O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength: lift it up: be not afraid."

Here then is a call from God,—that God who manifested his love to the world in the gift of His dear Son;—an earnest and intelligible call upon his own people,—those who constitute His Zion and Jerusalem;—to deliver a faithful testimony to the world of His great love.—"Ye that know me, who have received the inward illumination of the heart, who have been adopted into the privileged family of my children,—ye highly favoured ones, who have been fed by the heavenly Shepherd on the rich pastures of the Gospel; and have been refreshed by the pure crystal stream, the water of life; remember what I say unto you: I charge you to bear a clear testimony to the grace and truth which is in Christ Jesus, to the cities of Judah, to the inhabitants of the earth." What else can this

mean,—"Lift up thy voice; lift it up with strength; lift it up, be not afraid,"—but that Christians who believe in a Saviour, should tell those who are strangers to the Gospel,—should give them, recommend to them, urge upon them,—the great gift of God? Ministers of course, are first of all meant in this address. Our God expects and demands each of these, to discharge the work of the ministry, with a zeal, a devotion and perseverance, that may convince the hearers, that he is sincere,—that he believes the message he delivers,—that he enjoys the blessing of it in his own soul,—that he is influenced by the momentous importance of it.

He hates the hireling disposition. He rebuked the selfish, ignorant Jewish teachers, by his prophets; "as dumb dogs, who cannot bark, loving to slumber." He designated the haughty Pharisees, and false teachers, "thieves and robbers."

And, on the other hand, He delights in his faithful servants. They have the most encouraging promises to cheer them on: and they need such spiritual support daily; for, considered in the abstract, there is no work more trying,—none that requires greater self-denial, and more intense application,—than the work of the ministry.

"Ye shall be my witnesses," said our Saviour, at the solemn moment of His ascension, "both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and in Samaria, and to the end of the world." Why is the voice to be lifted up so high? Why does our Lord command that the servant should thus lay himself out, wear

himself out, spend and be spent, like Paul the great Apostle, in this work? Ah, there is a good reason! Souls are to be saved, rescued, brought from hell to heaven. The world, lying in wickedness, cannot easily be roused. "Darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people." Sin has benumbed and partly destroyed the mental perceptions and spiritual feelings of fallen man. Every faculty of the mind and heart has been injured, perverted and deadened. We have to prophesy to dead bones; like Ezekiel in his vision of the valley. We have to preach to those, who are spiritually blind and diseased;—to those who are dead in trespasses and sins, and captives under Satan's power. It requires a loud voice,—a mighty energy—to create new life among such disordered elements. And such is the condition, not only of the heathens, but of Christian heathens; in fact, of every unconverted sinner. The minister must therefore be fully aware of the materials he has to work upon,—to benefit and to improve. Oh, what a solemn text for us, who are delivering this message! but, in a certain measure, binding upon the consciences of all whose hearts have been opened;—every true Israelite and inhabitant of Jerusalem. It is because we do not feel enough, the importance of the solemn duty laid on us;—which is, to labour that souls be saved:—it is because ministers, and believers at large, are not sufficiently impressed with the obligations and responsibilities, the Lord has laid upon them; that the testimony is delivered with so little effect,—

that so little is done,—that so few appear to have any idea at all, of speaking a word for the honour and glory of God, and doing something for the spiritual welfare of others.

III. We consider the *main substance or theme of the testimony* which is to be delivered. It is expressed with prophetic shortness and beauty ;—"Say unto the cities of Judah : *Behold your God!*" Such is indeed the substance of the Gospel. It makes the sinner acquainted with his God ;—that wonderful mystery, which wise men and philosophers in all ages of heathenism searched and studied, and never could satisfactorily find out : for it is but too true, that man, by reason's power, can never find out God. He dwelleth in a light which no mortal can approach unto. Here, in this blessed revelation, the mystery is unveiled : "*Behold your God!*"—the incarnate God,—Jehovah Jesus Christ. Great is this mystery of godliness. God is manifested in the flesh. Prophets, by the eye of inspiration, beheld him from afar ; and said in joyful anticipation,—"Behold, the Lord God will come!" John the Baptist, who prepared his way, saw him with his bodily eyes, and cried, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world!" The beloved disciple, who lay on his bosom, bore the adoring testimony,—"We beheld his glory,—the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." On Christmas morning we are privileged to proclaim to the world ;—"Behold! he is come!" We can mutually invite each other,—"Come, let us go even unto Beth-

lehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us!" Ah, what a sublime sight! There is the stable of Bethlehem's inn; and in that manger, lies the eternal Word made flesh!—the Child, whose name is *Wonderful!* In this humble abode, sprung up the root of Jesse, the offspring of David, the bright and morning Star! From its rising, are dated the hope, the comfort, the peace of sinners, the recovery of man, the salvation of the world. The Angels had an insight into this great plan of redemption; therefore they sang, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will toward men."

"Ye cities of Judah"—Ye children of Zion—Ye ends of the earth;—"behold your God!" Proclaim the great object of the incarnation of the Son of God to the world at large. Tell them, why this God-man stooped down so low,—to the lowest degree of human existence. Tell them, that he assumed human flesh and blood in a sinless form, in order that he might die for the sins of the world. Ah, if this child had not been born, they had been lost indeed, who are now the heirs of glory. Wherever in the word of prophecy, the coming of the Messiah is mentioned, the holy seers appear to be in raptures of joy; and it is represented as the commencement of a golden age,—as an event by which the greatest blessings were to come to the world. And truly, facts have proved, that the birth at Bethlehem has brought the most glorious blessings to the world. From the life and death

of that Divine person, has originated the salvation of millions from eternal destruction: and countless myriads still unborn, in every land and clime, will yet be partakers of the benefit of his redemption. What can be more joyful, what can be more sublime, than to see a human being,—morally depraved and spiritually estranged from God and lost in sin,—recovered, reformed, sanctified, becoming a child of God, an heir of heaven when life's journey is ended? Show me any other religion like Christianity, which leads to God, renews the heart, turns the lion into a lamb, enables a man to subdue his unholy desires, and gives him strength to lead a holy life. Hinduism does not; and Mahomed does not: nor can that wonderful operation upon the mind and heart be accomplished by much-boasted natural religion. All these leave man as he is,—a proud, selfish, wayward being. Just turn to the verse following that of my text; and you will see a practical proof of what Christ gives, and in what a desirable character he is represented, to every one who is looking out for the right way,—who is seeking safety, protection, food for his mental and spiritual powers:—"He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." The prophet, in this beautiful figurative representation, leads us to the happy rural scenes at Bethlehem, where David, a thousand years before the birth of the Saviour, tended his sheep. And a more faithful shepherd never was seen in the land. We read how he watched

over his charge, and delivered them from the mouth of the lion and the bear. He was, in this, a true type of Christ, the good shepherd. He, like David, is both king and shepherd. Is He not represented, as seeking and saving that which is lost? Cannot every converted sinner, every sincere believer bear his testimony to the fact? "Yes!" each replies:—"He found and gathered me into his fold?" Is not this Gospel we hear and read, when heard and read in the proper frame of mind, worthy of being compared to the richest pasture? Is not prayer—a sense of His gracious presence—like a refreshing draught from the clear spring to the soul? How many poor and feeble ones, children in age, and children in knowledge and grace, have experienced his tender hand,—his arm gently supporting and leading them, when strength and courage were failing them! Have you not heard their notes of admiration and praise,—the song of joy, tuned by the contrite heart?—"Oh, what a kind and gracious God and Saviour have I! How patient and compassionate is he!—so kindly inviting, so gently reproving, so affectionately encouraging and leading me on, in the path of righteousness; freely forgiving my sins, my ingratitude and follies!" Yes, such a kind Shepherd is He. It needs only, for a man to make proof, to put himself under his guidance,—to follow him: and he will find, by his happy experience, that He is, what his name implies, the true Saviour,—the good Shepherd.

I have often been encouraged, by that kind, comprehensive declaration, which He made: "And other

heep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring: and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd." Here, you see, he extends his arms very wide. The lost sheep of the house of Israel are not enough for him. When Greece and Italy and Asia Minor had heard the joyful sound, he was not then satisfied. When Europe and America have bowed to the sceptre of this great King, he is not yet satisfied. There are yet other sheep; and they must be brought in.

"Let the Redeemer's name be sung,
In every land by every tongue."

Christianity is not stereotype like Hinduism. It is a grand expansive principle, like the light of heaven. It shines more and more, till it diffuses its heavenly rays over the whole universe.

Therefore Zion's great commission is still in force:—"Say unto the cities of Judah,"—say to every town, and village, and family in Hindustan,—"*Behold your God!*" Look at him. Study his character. He says, "I am God, and none else!" He is your God. All the others are fictitious and false. Looking is believing. We may look to him for every thing—for every blessing. There is a peculiar blessing in a family—in a congregation,—where the members have all learned to look to Him. Alas! most people look downward. Their affections are entangled here below. Their god is made of gold, or some grosser material. We are directed to look upward. Lift up your eyes to Jesus—to that place, where he dwells. There is something very cheering

in one true look to heaven. It elevates the soul. "*Behold your God!*" That incarnate God will come again;—with a glorious, a heavenly reward for his people. He will come again;—with vengeance and fiery indignation for his enemies.

As the pious Jew rejoiced in the prospect of his coming; so the pious Christian knows not a more pleasant theme. Nothing can fill his being with happy anticipation, like the certain hope, that Jesus Christ will come again. "Behold, I come quickly. Come soon, Lord Jesus!"

The message of the text is the message to be proclaimed to believers and unbelievers in this Church. Oh, that He who hath the key of David, who openeth and no man shutteth,—who can bless, and none shall hinder,—would be pleased to fill this place with his glory! Oh, that thousands yet unborn, who shall hear, in this sacred place, the name of Jesus; may be led by the good Spirit to find him,—to believe in him,—to experience his power to save. Oh that he, whose is the power and glory, may shed forth his heavenly light from this place, to dispel the darkness still hanging round us:—gathering many into his blessed fold.

Let us pray for it; let us ask it in faith, upon the strength of the Divine promise; let us be up, and doing; and God, even our own God, will give us his blessing.

THANKSGIVING SERMON FOR THE TERMINATION OF THE WAR IN THE PUNJAUB.

Psalm xlvi. 8—10.

Come, behold the works of the Lord; what desolations He hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth: He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder: He burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen; I will be exalted in the earth.

A CERTAIN proud and overbearing king, of whose history we read in the book of Daniel, after being humbled to the dust for his pride and other sins, made in his old age the following confession:—"I bless the Most High who liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, and say unto him, What doest thou?"

This humble confession was the result of a great change which had taken place in king Nebuchadnezzar's mind, in consequence of an awful Divine visitation. He acknowledged, what he had never owned before, that there is a God in heaven, who rules the

destinies of the world ; and that, compared with HIM, man even in the most exalted position, is like the dust of the balance. The great conqueror, who first established an extensive empire in ancient times, was at length compelled to own, that he was dependent on the hand and power of that omnipotent King, who exercises unlimited dominion in heaven and earth

The great man, to whom has been entrusted the government of this mighty empire, must have had some such thoughts as these, in reflecting on the great victory lately achieved over a dangerous and powerful hostile army ; when he directed, that public thanks be offered up in all Churches in India, for this signal deliverance, and the restoration of peace : and doubtless every true Christian must feel gratified, that a gracious overruling Providence is thus acknowledged, and suitable returns made for national mercies.

That great political events, which affect the existence and welfare of nations and governments, are under the particular controul and direction of the Almighty, is a fact, which past history teaches on every page.

That Almighty God, in his wisdom, directs and regulates those events in such a manner, as to make them advance and mature his great designs, in connexion with Christianity and the spread of the Gospel, is equally certain.

This observation applies to India in a peculiar sense. Here, we see an astonishing fact,—an em-

pire of a hundred millions placed under the rule of Great Britain. By a series of political events—wars, revolutions, treaties; province after province has been added to the empire. The last great victory near the banks of the Jhelum, has completed the progressive and prosperous course. The grand circle is finished; and there is not a tribe or nation left within India proper, from the Berhamputer and Indus, which does not pay allegiance to British sovereignty, or bow to England's paramount power.

It may be said in very truth; "*This is the work of the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes.*" It is He who has subdued the nations under us. God has done it;—with the gracious end, that the great designs of His Providence, may, by our instrumentality, be carried out. Therefore, when the voice of joy and thanksgiving is heard on an occasion like the present; let high and low, rulers and subjects, join with heartfelt gratitude, in the devout acknowledgment of king David; "*Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be glory!*"

The words of Divine inspiration which I have selected for the present occasion, are in harmony with the sentiments I have advanced. May the same Spirit who indited them, assist and enable us rightly to understand and gratefully to appreciate the heavenly message! We are here instructed, that the shaking of kingdoms, the convulsion of nations, the destruction of empires, and establishment of new ones; as well as the termination of desolating wars and the return of

peace and prosperity; are all the acts of Almighty God. When the great German Reformer, Luther, was in trouble,—when the good cause of the reformation appeared in danger; he used to say, "Come, let us sing the 46th Psalm." Indeed, it presents a most lively representation, of the conflicts through which the Church of CHRIST has ever been passing; and the gracious protection and support, she has ever received from her Head. Read this beautiful Psalm. It shows that true religion three thousand years ago, was the same as it is now; and that holy, God-fearing men, found it a good thing, to place their trust and confidence in the Lord. They found that this is the surest way to comfort and peace. I admire the striking contrast—in which the Church and the world,—God's word and promises and the workings of the power of darkness and his instruments,—are placed side by side, in these bold figures;—"*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.*" Is not this heaving of mountains, and swelling of waters, and furious roaring of the sea, a striking picture of the history of the wars, and tumults and commotions, which have desolated the earth? And then comes the contrast. "*There is a river*—a gently flowing river—*the streams whereof make glad the city of God.*" In the midst of this busy, sinful, tumultuous world;—torn and divided by strife

and human passions;—there is a blessed place—the spiritual Zion—in which flows the water of life;—a little heaven upon earth,—a band of believers, who hold by God's word, who love to hear its precious doctrines and promises, and labour to live up to its sacred precepts. *God is in the midst of her.* This is the happy place where it is good to dwell.

Then, as if one of the happy inhabitants of Zion, standing on her lofty hill, were taking a survey of the world around, he calls upon the others with lively interest; "*Come and see, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth.*" While Zion's children are in peace and safety; what a fearful scene does this world present! Well might the inspired writer give vent to his feelings, in these accents of surprise and astonishment; when he saw before him, that which was, and that which was to come. This earth has ever been a scene of strife and war, a battle-field; because all flesh has corrupted God's way upon the earth. From the time that Cain, excited by envy and wrath, went out and slew his brother; the passions of sinful man have, like the four winds upon the sea, striven for the mastery. God declared before the flood, "*My Spirit shall not always strive with man.*" When they had become hopeless, incorrigible;—he withdrew that salutary influence, which acts as a warning monitor upon the mind. He left them to their own devices: and what man will do, when that heavenly light is gone, history sufficiently shows. Why, human beings are turned into demons. When, as the

Apostle says, the course of nature is set on fire; they will follow the impulse of their lust, covetousness, ambition and hatred. They will delight in destruction and scenes of butchery and death. Behold, what desolations have been made in the earth! Only glance at the late wars, within this century; which were fomented by infidelity, and carried on by the insatiable ambition of one man, and devoured about two millions of human lives. The French, by a public decree, and other nations in practice, disowned a Divine Providence: and was it not, as if God had answered from heaven, "I will now show you, what will be the result, if you take the divine prerogative out of my hand?" And He did show it to infidel Europe, in streams of blood!

The text ascribes wars and desolations to God. And indeed He does it; but in a very remarkable way. While the arts, intrigues and subtleties of diplomacy are exercised; while cabinets discuss political questions, and governments declare war; while armies are combining, and the battle-field is chosen; God, who rules in heaven and earth, directs the course of events; gives victory to one, and defeat to the other; punishes the guilty; and chastises the less guilty, with a view to their improvement. And in these stirring events, we discover, not only an almighty, but a wise and gracious Providence. God has always his Zion,—his Church in view. The case of the Jews illustrates this point. Nebuchadnezzar conquered their country—burned Jerusalem and the temple—and carried the people

away captive. It was the very chastisement which the prophet, upon Divine command, foretold should follow their sins. But ere long, the same God delivered his people: and the irretrievable destruction of that tyrannical empire was soon accomplished:—Zion delivered—Babylon destroyed.

We see the same plan pursued in the early history of that remarkable nation, God's chosen people. Pharaoh made slaves of them. Their faces were ground with hard labour;—their male infants thrown into the Nile. This called forth sighs and prayers for deliverance: and these reached the heavenly portals. Then followed avenging justice—the fearful plagues;—and finally the drowning of the host of the Egyptians in the Red Sea. In the fire of tribulation, this early Church was purified, was taught to pray: and then came deliverance. Do we not discover the same wise and gracious plan adopted in God's providence with the nations of Europe? Why was Protestant Germany deluged by the thirty years' war,—by which such a large proportion of the inhabitants were destroyed, and the beautiful valleys turned into desolate deserts? God allowed it: because they had turned away from the holy and pure principles and doctrine of the Reformation, and rested in the cold forms of orthodox confessions; or idolized neology. Why did God allow the French, in the late wars of the Revolution, to overwhelm and desolate Europe, like clouds of locusts? Because of infidelity and irreligion; which, like a rank poison, had corrupted the higher ranks of society. And when the

fearful chastisement was over, and a new spiritual life dawned, and the nations once more publicly recognized and acknowledged God;—when, after the memorable battle of Leipzig, the three crowned heads returned thanks to God in the market-place of that city, surrounded by the columns of their guards;—then the land was delivered from the dreadful scourge; and, as in the case of Babylon, the rod, with which He had chastised his people, was cast into the fire.

Those desolating wars were indeed the wrath of God. What wrecks and ruin they left behind! And yet the remedy was adapted to the disease. Gentler means would have been ineffectual. But from that time, our Churches had a new life infused into them. Our Bible, Missionary and other Societies, for the spread of the Redeemer's Kingdom and the improvement of man, sufficiently show this.

And as it is to God we must trace the scourge of war; so it is He who brings the same to a termination: "*He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth.*" Probably such a happy event took place at the time when this Psalm was composed. It may have been after David had conquered the Philistines, Ammonites and Syrians. God gave him a peaceful old age; and he saw his son Solomon seated on the throne, the nation reposing in prosperity, under their vines and fig trees:—a happy time for Israel. The beautiful temple, one of the noblest structures, was built by Solomon, when "wars had ceased;" and the worship of Jehovah was there carried on, as it never

had been. My brethren, we have this morning, in our devotional exercises, raised the voice of praise and thanksgiving, for the return of peace; after all the horrors of war. With the liveliest sympathy we have welcomed this event. What waste of treasure, what awful sacrifice of life, what disorder, plunder, cruelty and injustice, has this Sikh rebellion caused!

Every lover of that kingdom, whose Head is the Prince of peace, must rejoice at the termination of such a war.

Well may we point, with humbled and grateful feelings, to the words under consideration;—"*He maketh wars to cease.*" We have seen the hand of God in it from first to last. We all remember the serious, if not dangerous, character of the conflict, in which the British army was lately engaged. If our troops were not actually beaten on one occasion; the advantages gained, were certainly of a very doubtful character. Moreover, other enemies were gathering on every side, who were doubtless ready to take a share in the war, and combine with the Sikhs, in the event of serious disaster. Clouds were gathering on every quarter of the horizon. Many faces gathered blackness. There was an impression upon many minds, that things had come to a crisis; and what effect, the rolling of the distant thunder had upon people in England, we have lately heard.

At once God lifted up his hand. He commanded the waves to be still:—and the war ceased. When all

trust in man's wisdom had failed, India beheld the Sikh leader in his own blindness rushing headlong into the very jaws of destruction. A great battle was fought. The enemy were driven like chaff before the wind. The capture of their artillery, the dispersion of their forces, the loss of camp and baggage, the rapid march of General Gilbert, and the consequent surrender of the Sikh Sirdars, the capture of Attock and Peshawar, the ignominious flight of Dost Mahomed and the Afghans, have given a brilliant termination to a disastrous war.

Almost literally were the emphatic words of the Psalmist realised; "*He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire;*"—when the arms of the conquered Sikhs were delivered up, and in large heaps piled up together. Surely this was an act of Divine goodness and mercy. The final result might have been very different. Yes, if God had so willed it; our bow might have been broken, and our spear cut in sunder; and English supremacy in India, have become a doubtful question.

But God is a hearer of prayer. He has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For the sake of ten righteous men, a wicked city would have been saved from destruction: and in the late danger, hundreds of God's people lifted up their hearts to Him in prayer. Ah! my brethren, there is greater power and force in these supplications, than in the spears and swords of the mighty. That heart which has been most earnest in prayer, will

doubtless be most lively and sincere in praising the Lord for his mercies.

I would lastly direct you to these solemn words;—"*Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen: I will be exalted in the earth:*" —a suitable remembrance on an occasion like the present!—when we are gratefully to acknowledge the delivering mercies of our God. Such a holy exercise requires a due preparation of mind. In the busy bustle of life, we generally overlook that which should be uppermost in our thoughts. There is much excitement in the reports of warlike proceedings. How much greater must it be,—to bear an active share in them,—to view the battle-field,—to meet the hostile columns! At such a time, there is much anxiety abroad. We look on second causes. We discuss the actions and merits of the combatants. When reverses are met with; we feel indignant: and when success follows, it is, as in the camp of Israel,—"Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly." And it is right that it should be so. Praise and honour are bestowed upon the brave;—and let them wear their laurels:—but we spoil every thing by forgetting GOD. English steel and British valour have achieved the victory, is the cry: whereas the more thoughtful, who reflect on the turns of war; and how one unforeseen event,—one unobserved ditch or hollow, which conceals a hidden enemy,—may turn the tide, and give the conflict an unexpected aspect,—must confess; that an overruling Providence has had His hand in it all; and has turned the scale.

"*Be still, and know that I am GOD!*"—"You are but men. You propose, and lay your plans; but I dispose. Be careful then to acknowledge your dependence on me. *I will be exalted.* I am jealous of my honour; especially with those who are called by my name." Great mercies call for heart-felt, humble acknowledgments. God delights to see these feelings expressed by a whole united nation, after national mercies. "*I will be exalted among the heathen!*"—"That is my desire—my purpose—my arrangement—to have my name honoured." So God said on one occasion, *I will get me honour in the eyes of Pharaoh!*—in his punishment;—because he would not bow to JEHOVAH, after all the miraculous displays of His power. So God is exalted,—as to every war,—in the deliverance of some; and in the humiliation and destruction of others.

God has remarkably blessed the English nation. He has rendered England victorious by land and sea. No nation has ever possessed such wealth, such greatness, such empires. During the late convulsions in Europe;—when every kingdom was moved, and thrones were overturned;—England stood firm, like a rock amidst the dashing surf of the ocean. How has this been? Because God has been worshipped and exalted by thousands in Britain; and because some small remnant at least, recognized the solemn resolve—"*I will be exalted among the heathen.*" My brethren, God can be exalted, only where he is known. I have sometimes heard the Hindoos say;—"GOD is

with the English: He has given them great knowledge and power." *They* see that there is something else needed, besides England's armies and splendid artillery and many devices.

Surely it is our part to exalt our GOD among the heathen;—to tell them, *where* we have derived the enlightened views, the morals, the integrity, the high character, which they recognize. We should point them to the Source of all these. If this were done faithfully,—judiciously,—with a due impression on our part, that God has commanded it;—they might be induced to reflect; to come and sit down beside the "*river, which makes glad the city of God.*" We have something more to do than administer justice; build good roads; and give the Hindoos a secular education, which, many now believe, makes them rather worse than better men. *We must give them that, by which God is exalted, Christ is glorified, and souls saved from moral and eternal ruin.* This is the boon that we should give them: and it is your business as well as mine, to aid in doing this. This is the great and glorious object, which Immanuel, the Prince of the kings of the earth, has in view. It must be done. And it must be done by the instrumentality of Christian England. Therefore He has put this splendid empire into her hands. Rely upon it: all the great political movements of our times must, in God's providence, subserve this great end. And when this is accomplished; when India's degraded sons cast away their idols, and learn to adore Jesus, the King of glory; a work, greater than

even all the victories and conquests of England, will have been achieved.

This Indian empire will, like other empires, last its destined time. When that time is expired, it will pass away. But—"*Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom!*" Wars will cease; and nation no more lift up the sword against nation. Then will be ushered in, the great and long-expected and prayed-for time of peace and refreshment before the face of the Lord; and the river flowing from Zion, will fertilize and renew every portion of this ransomed world. Then God will be exalted in the earth. His glory will visibly be manifested in the eyes of all nations. May the Lord hasten it in his own good time!

THE LORD COMFORTING PAUL.

Acts xviii. 9, 10.

Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city.

THE characteristic features of Missionary work are, and have been, the same, in all ages of the Church; the history of which presents a chequered picture of trials and comforts. It is on a thorny path the Lord conducts those, whom he deems worthy of the honour of carrying on his gracious intentions for the restoration of the world. Under such a leader as *the Captain of our salvation*, the victory cannot be doubtful: but it must be achieved by many a sore struggle. The history of St. Paul,—the greatest of all Missionaries, except our Lord Himself,—constitutes the history of the Church, as described in the Acts of the Apostles; and proves the truth, which I have asserted. At the time of his conversion, the Lord said, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

Nor can it be expected to be otherwise, my dear brethren. The very character of our work,—preaching the Gospel to a world lying in wickedness,—must lead us to anticipate obstructions and difficulties on every side. The soldier of Christ enters hostile ground; the prince of which holds a very strong

dominion over the hearts of his subjects: and though he is a usurper, yet so long as men by nature love darkness rather than light, he will have a stronghold, which he will defend to the utmost.

But if the evangelization of the world is, as we believe it to be, determined of God; we may certainly expect, that He will render peculiar aid to those, whom he employs as agents in executing His purposes; and that they will receive from Him a measure of support, encouragement and comfort, sufficient to help them to rise above their difficulties, and to stand firm and unmoved against all opposition.

Those who witness the conflict between light and darkness, will perceive; that human power and enthusiasm alone, can never ensure the victory. The *arm of the Lord* is requisite to further the work; and to give it success. And all who are engaged on the right side,—in Christ's service,—must earnestly seek, and will assuredly find, that their strength shall be equal to their day.

Those holy men, by whose instrumentality God in old times carried out his great designs, received from him most encouraging assurances of his favour and assistance. When Abraham, in the true Missionary spirit, left his kindred and his father's house, to sojourn as a stranger in Canaan; that gracious promise was uttered,—"Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." A similar promise was made to the prophet Jeremiah, who had to denounce divine judgments, and make a last offer of

divine mercy, to the rebellious Jews;—"Behold I have made thee this day a defenced city and an iron pillar and brazen walls; and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee."

With such assurances from the Lord of heaven, the patriarchs and prophets felt strong, to face all the opposition and enmity of a depraved world and people: and by a like cheering declaration, Paul was animated to preach the Gospel with boldness, undaunted by the prospect of persecution and death.

An experience of many years in the blessed work which I have to commend to your earnest attention and cordial support,* has made me deeply sensible, that nothing less than the faith of Abraham and the zeal of Paul,—nothing less than an entire reliance upon the gracious support of God,—will enable a man to persevere in this trying, but glorious and most rewarding employment.

With the view of stirring you up, my dear brethren, to greater earnestness in supporting this blessed work, I have chosen the cheering words of my text for our consideration; and will present them to you under the following divisions.

I. A DIVINE ENCOURAGEMENT.

II. A DIVINE COMMAND.

III. A DIVINE PROMISE.

IV. A DIVINE REVELATION OF SECRET TRUTH.

* Preached, in the Old or Mission Church, Calcutta, December 10th, 1845, for the Church Missionary Society.

1. *The divine encouragement.*—Paul experienced many a trial and disappointment in his labours from his own brethren, the Jews at Corinth. These went to his heart. He needed consolation; and his faithful Lord afforded it in a night vision, by saying to him—"Be not afraid."

We are apt to think, that men like the Apostles, endowed with extraordinary gifts and graces, were far above the common feelings of our own position; but, though Paul had revelations from heaven, and could glory in tribulation, he was a man of like passions and infirmities with ourselves: and it is certain, that the more of mental refinement and purity of mind a man possesses, the keener will be his grief on beholding a sinful world, alienated from God, and suffering the fearful consequences of his displeasure. The severe conflicts of soul through which St. Paul passed, he pathetically describes in various places: as where he writes,—"We would not have you ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life." Indeed so deeply was the Apostle sometimes affected in spirit, that the presence of a brother and fellow-labourer was most cheering to him; and, when at Athens, he had no rest in his spirit; till he sent for his beloved son Timothy to comfort him.

Yes! my brethren, it was not Paul, the wise—the zealous,—the learned—who achieved such victories for the Gospel; but it was the power of God in him—

the unseen, but cheering presence of Jesus,—which enabled him to rise above his trials, and come off more than conqueror.

We will now take a hasty glance at some of the circumstances, which appear to have alarmed and discouraged him, at the time the Lord gave him this Divine encouragement.

The first was, the deplorable condition of the heathen among whom he was then preaching the Gospel We read in the previous chapter, that his spirit was stirred within him, when he saw the city of Athens wholly given to idolatry. Holy indignation at the numerous idol-temples and their senseless and blasphemous worship,—combined with deep compassion for the wretched state of the multitudes who ignorantly worshipped they knew not what,—produced this feeling.

And his spirit was also stirred by the sight of philosophers smiling at the ignorance of the people, and priding themselves on their own infidel and atheistical systems, devised by the cunning craftiness of men. But he felt, if possible, more distressed still, at the bitter and determined hatred and opposition of his own brethren against the Gospel, when he visited their synagogues, and tried to reason with them, and convince them that Jesus was the Christ. That veil of judicial blindness, which was over their eyes, and which still causes them to oppose and blaspheme, made him at Corinth to shake his raiment, and say unto them, "Your blood be on your own heads!"

I will not dwell on the bodily sufferings, which the Apostle endured in his unparalleled course of labour. You are all aware, my brethren, that spiritual trials are more severe than those connected with the body. There is something peculiarly distressing in the consciousness of standing alone, and fighting single-handed against the opinions, prejudices, habits, and malice of this wicked world; and with the powers of darkness likewise arrayed against you. And such was the position of St. Paul. You can conceive then, my brethren, that only the encouragement of God, and a conviction of His truth and power, could enable him, under these circumstances, to maintain his ground. In the night watches he looked up, and beheld Jesus, his dear Master, saying, "Be not afraid." And I would ask, my brethren, is not the Christian in this heathen land, placed in a somewhat similar position to that of the Apostle, at Athens and Corinth? What are the feelings of a sincere follower of Christ, who beholds in this nineteenth century, this country, with a hundred millions and upwards, still enveloped in heathen darkness,—mentally, physically and spiritually depressed and degraded? I can assure you from experience, that the same causes which influenced the Apostle's feelings, affect those of the Missionary in India. I returned some time since from a tour through the district of Burdwan at the time of Kalee Poojah, having beheld in every village the worship of the black and monstrous image of that abominable deity. When I

saw the wild dances of the deluded villagers, and heard their wicked songs, in honour of their false god, I was indeed depressed above measure, and could not but utter the prayer, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt thou not arise, and subdue these people unto thyself?"

And we Missionaries in India, suffer opposition from infidel philosophers too; as the Apostle did at Athens. The bigoted Brahmin of the old school, is anxious to defend the grossness of his system by the plausible arguments of pantheism; while our young philosophers, rejecting the most offensive materials of the old creed, endeavour to set up a deity of their own imagination. But old and young are both united in their hatred of Christianity: these latter availing themselves of the writings of the worst European infidels, in their impotent efforts to chase Christianity from Bengal.

And here I may remark, that Englishmen in India occupy a similar position to that which the Jews did in the Roman colonies; but with this marked difference, that whilst the Jews existed in these colonies by sufferance; England here possesses a paramount authority: and accordingly the influence of her children for good or evil is the greater.

Far be it from me, my brethren, to draw a parallel between the unbelieving, hardened Jews, who were spread over the Roman Empire, and the English in India. No! thank God, we live in better days, and may rejoice, at the goodly sight of Christians here,

who are not ashamed of their religion; who appreciate its ordinances; and are, in daily practice, a living epistle of Christ before the heathen; yea, and who cordially and fervently pray for the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom, and lend other aid thereto. Oh, what comfort has many a Missionary derived in a solitary station, from the residence of a godly family in his neighbourhood! But alas! the number of such, it must be acknowledged, is few; and though among those who form the majority, we seldom meet with open dislike; we have to witness a negative opposition on many hands. It has sometimes been a matter of surprise to me, that those who have been brought up in a Christian country, could be so insensible to their privileges, and to the return the Lord expects for the many mercies he has bestowed on them. Instead of comfort and encouragement, we too often behold cold and heartless indifference; or a readiness to find fault with our plans, and depreciate our labours, and scornfully to allude to the little success that is apparent from our efforts. Brethren, these things ought not so to be. The Lord cannot approve of it; and the work cannot prosper as it might, while professed Christians act thus. Truly we may affirm, that if the success depended upon men only, Missionary work would fall to the ground; but we hear a voice from heaven saying, "*Be not afraid.*"

II. We now proceed to *the Divine command*;—"Speak, and hold not thy peace."

When the Almighty issues an order, it is enough. Contradiction is not to be thought of. We must obey and act. The Apostle here received a short and decided reiteration of the great command,—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,"—as the appointed means for their conversion. The eternal, glorious truth of God, is to be conveyed through the living teacher, who has been chosen as the most suitable agent for arousing sinners from their sleep of death. St. Paul well understood the subject, on which he was to speak. There was in him no want of zeal or perseverance. Yet the Lord repeated the injunction,—"Speak, and hold not thy peace." And it is desirable, yea, necessary, it should still be repeated; and that we admonish each other, to press forward in the glorious course—to speak so loud and faithfully that sinners may hear;—so distinctly, that their understanding may be convinced;—so affectionately, that their hearts may be touched. We must hold back no part of the message. No reserve is allowed. For where such heart-cheering, delightful news is to be delivered; the more that is heard and received of it, the more will joy and peace abound.

The Apostle was faithful in this respect. We find him, first in the synagogue of every town he entered, arguing and persuading; and afterwards in the public places of dispute;—at Corinth, in a school; at Athens, in the Areopagus; at Philippi, on the river side, at a place where prayer was wont to be made. If he had

reached the distant shores of India, he would doubtless not have hesitated to stand on the river side again; as well as in the crowded bazars; to proclaim the joyful news of salvation through Christ to the poor deluded Hindoos. St Paul also spoke the word freely and boldly before kings and governors. He made the governor Felix to tremble; as well as the poor jailer to rejoice.

Oh, that the divine command of our text were duly appreciated and acted upon, by British Christians in this heathen land! It is surely meant for you, my brethren. Are you not placed here, in the providence of God, to act as witnesses for him; and to testify against idolatry, and the sin connected with it? Surely you are to communicate, what you have so freely received. There is something very significant in the expression, "Speak, and hold not thy peace." False shame is a sad enemy: while a free, open, candid confession, wisely and affectionately made, is winning and beautiful. Our heathen servants and neighbours should witness devotional services in our houses, and feel the impress of our pious example. Example goes far with the Hindoos, as with all other people: and I have repeatedly heard influential persons of piety mentioned by them, with the highest respect: while those who are living without God, are equally marked. Christians must determine to swim against the stream, and not to follow the evil course of others. How commonly do we fall into the error of conversing on any but the great subject! How little

do we practically understand the noblest use of speech and reason,—which is,—to speak often one to another upon the things concerning the Kingdom of God! Yet it is for such conversation, that a book of remembrance is written before God (Mal. iii. 16.) The only principle, powerful enough to enable us to do this, is that of living, moving, and acting, as in the Divine presence and hearing.

III. *The Divine promise;* "*I am with thee: and no man shall set on thee, to hurt thee.*" This assurance will enable a man, though weak and frail in himself, not only to enter upon, but to carry forward, the self-denying, and to human view, most unpromising work of living, speaking, and acting for God, in a heathen land. Without a realizing sense of His presence, the labours of a Missionary would be irksome indeed; for there is often little that is cheering, and much that is depressing, in our daily duties. Those engaged in the business of this world are exerting themselves for a definite end. The Missionary too has an end in view. But whilst in the former case, present comfort is the object desired,—in our's, it is the recompense of the reward hereafter, to which we must look. A Missionary must feel, that Jesus, the crucified, the glorified Saviour, is his own, his all, his everlasting portion; and that he cannot be disappointed in Him and having Him; or fail in realizing His promises. He has said, "I am with thee." And he is with us; strengthening us in our weakness, comforting us in our trials, and cheering us onward by shedding abroad

his love in our hearts. It was a sense of his Saviour's presence, which gave Luther the great Reformer, such boldness; so that when warned not to enter the city of Worms, he said, "If there were as many devils there, as tiles upon the roofs, I would not fear to enter in the name of my Lord." The sense of Christ's presence with us, as an Almighty and gracious, though unseen Companion, gives boldness (παῤῥησία) to the feeblest minister; for he has a consciousness, that the message he delivers is not his own,—that its effect depends not on his ability. The peculiar difficulties connected with preaching to the heathen, are known to the Missionary alone. To stand up publicly before those who are professedly Satan's worshippers; and who do not scruple to tell us, that they dislike, and hate, both us, and our message; is a very different thing from speaking before an assembly like the present. It requires peculiar grace and supernatural courage; and that can only be supplied by the presence of Jesus. Accompanied by Him, the Missionary goes forth like David, prepared for conflict: and like him, obtains the victory over the gigantic enemy.

To this gracious promise, "I am with thee;" the Lord adds another; "No one shall set on thee to hurt thee." An unbelieving world did all in their power to hurt the Apostle; yet not a hair fell from his head. I refer you to 2 Cor. xi. for his own account of his wonderful sufferings and deliverances: and there, you will see, that when stoned in one place, scourged in

another, and imprisoned in a third, his life was still preserved; and onward he went, rejoicing in tribulation to the end. When he had finished his course and kept the faith; the sword of Nero was at last employed, only as the instrument of introducing him to the enjoyment of his reward. Thus he died a conqueror.

In consequence of the English power being paramount in this heathen land; we, my brethren, have not to encounter the open persecution which the Apostle endured: but God's faithful servants must ever bear the cross; and a certain measure of shame and contempt will always fall upon every true Missionary. The indifference of the nominal Christian, and the sneer of the infidel heathen, daily drive us to the throne of our sympathizing High-priest in earnest, heartfelt prayer. Our crown of rejoicing in this "day of small things," is the gathering in of a few to the fold of Christ. Thus He makes his presence felt, not only to us individually, but through us, in the experience of our faithful converts; who may still be called the first-fruits of India unto Christ; for the full harvest is yet to be reaped.

IV. I must direct your attention *to the divine revelation of secret truth:* "I have much people in this city." Oh, what a sweet and refreshing assurance must this have been to the burdened mind of the Apostle! It was a bright and cheering ray of sunshine, shooting across the dark and arduous path he had to tread. Under its reviving influence, the man

who just before was pressed above measure, and overwhelmed in spirit, at witnessing the blindness and wickedness of Jews and idolaters, gathered courage: his anxieties and fears vanished. The travail of his spirit for the salvation of souls, was beheld by Him who seeth in secret, and who declared that his heart's desire should be realized,—"For" said he, "I have much people in this city."

Thus, my brethren, while we sow in tears, and for many a long year cultivate the seemingly barren waste, a harvest of joy is preparing. Where human eyes can perceive but little fruit; in God's eyes, it is ripening and preparing for his garner. His Omniscience penetrates the densest heathen darkness: and the power of his grace, when once put into operation, is Almighty power. The conversion of the world is as easy to Him as its first creation: and, when He says, "Let there be light," there shall be light. Sinners shall be saved by the preaching of the Gospel; because He has determined it shall be so. It is as if he had said: "They are all ready; and thou shalt be my instrument to gather them in." In Corinth it was even so. A Church of believers was established; many of whom proved to the Apostle real children in the faith.

And may I not venture, my brethren, to apply this cheering declaration of Jesus to this city, and to this country at large? I hesitate not to do so. For the Lord has shewn his intentions, by delivering India into the hands of Christian England; and thus made

this land of much people, a land of much hope. From the moment that the victory of Clive announced the overthrow of the Mogul dynasty, the days of Hindoo idolatry were numbered, and the Divine command could not be mistaken,—"Go, ye Christians; and preach salvation through Christ in this heathen land. Go, and execute my orders; and my word shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it."

And again; has not Missionary effort been in a real measure blessed among us, wherever Missionaries have been engaged? It certainly has. We cannot look on our own Missions, and those of kindred Societies; without acknowledging, that in the midst of much which is depressing, we have abundant reason for encouragement. Soldiers who take the field, are prepared to fight before they conquer. The husbandman who tills the ground, knows it will require watering and weeding, before a harvest can be produced: and the longer the ground has lain fallow, the more difficult will be its cultivation. Thus, you cannot expect a system, which has entered into the veins and marrow of the body of this nation, to be overturned by a few feeble and transient efforts. In the first years of the residence of the British in Calcutta, when commerce was in its infancy, some hundreds of sailors died annually near Diamond Harbour, and disease swept away multitudes of European adventurers among other classes. But did the merchant on this account shrink from pursuing Indian commerce? By no means. A mine of gold was before his eyes; and he

dared to meet the chance of death, with the hope of sharing a portion of the prize. We have a far nobler aim in view. It is to open heaven to the millions of this land; and to put the pearl of great price into India's diadem. Surely then, we must not shrink from pursuing an object so glorious in its prospect,—so sure in its attainment.

To prove that Missionary work is advancing; I need only point out to you what is doing in this city,* where the number of converts is slowly but steadily increasing; where the Gospel is regularly and faithfully preached to the Hindoos; and where, in almost every street, you find a school. Do you not recognize the voice of the Lord to yourselves, in the very words of my text, "I have much people in this city?" Sometimes we may know the secret counsel, by the open providence.

And, now, my dear brethren, allow me, in concluding my subject, to point out to you, that we may really regard the words of my text, as addressed to the Church at large; and may recognize in them a solemn duty on us all. I have before remarked, that Christians living in a heathen land are sent by God as His especial witnesses; and are to do Missionary work wherever their influence reaches. I believe that none of us is sufficiently impressed by this; though it is so plain and obvious, when rightly considered. There is a deadness among professing Christians, a want of

* Calcutta.

spirituality, of devotedness, of personal self-denial. We walk among the dying, and witness them perishing,—without concern, or an attempt to save them. Our days are so occupied by the business of this life, and the wants of our poor perishing bodies are so much considered, that we are apt to think, we can spare no time or influence, or next to none, for God and his cause. In saying this, I do not wish to charge Europeans in India with illiberality. I should be unjust were I to do so. What I mean is, that we have too little of the spirit of the poor widow, who threw in all her living into the treasury of the sanctuary; and thereby procured for herself the Saviour's commendation, when he declared,—"She hath given more than they all." Again, I ask,—has a nation ever occupied a more favourable position for doing the work of God in a heathen land, than England in India? Certainly, never. Is it not clear, if you regard the present state of the Hindoo mind, that the Almighty is preparing India for the reception of his best gifts? Our schools are filled with young men, eager to learn our language, to become acquainted with our literature, to imitate us in our habits, and in fact, to be influenced by us in every thing. Speak then, my brethren, and be not silent: show the Hindoos you have a religion; and that it is the best religion for sinful man,—the only one which will render him holy and happy; which will afford him comfort in the troubles of life,—make him hopeful in death,—and for ever blessed in eternity. The idolater is not afraid to repeat his

senseless ceremonies at the shrine of his idol, or to display his god of straw and mud to public view.

The young would-be philosopher is not ashamed to publish his infidel productions, compiled from the authors of the vilest blasphemies ever written against our adorable Saviour. Why then should you stand back?—why hesitate, freely to confess the precious name of Him, who has bought for you eternal bliss by his blood-shedding,—going to the Cross itself for you? Unite your efforts then, my brethren, with the Missionaries of Jesus in heathen India. Union is the grand and moving principle in the Church of Christ, and the earnest of victory over Satan's kingdom. We are living in an age in which grand gigantic schemes are devised and executed by the combined efforts of talent and wealth. We are astonished in hearing almost daily, of new associations being formed for advancing the interests of nations and individuals. The whole world is moving onward with accelerated speed. The prophetic words are literally fulfilling: "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."

Oh, let us learn a lesson from the children of this world; who are so often wiser in their generation than the children of light. Let us become as one man, and labour with one heart, to advance the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour. India is to be added as a portion to his inheritance; and her now degraded children are to become his sons and daughters.

Let none regard the conversion of this people as the

work of the Missionary exclusively. The whole Church must help, for "there is much land to be possessed." I have alluded to the fact of the blessing arising from the influence and example of even one pious and consistent family. What then might not be accomplished, if the thousands who are scattered abroad throughout India were of a like spirit?

We want your prayers, your earnest, fervent supplications at the throne of grace on our behalf; on behalf of our converts, and of the unconverted heathen. This is the most powerful aid you can give us. It opens the heart and hand of God, as well as of man; and leads Him to pour out the richest treasures of His grace upon us.

Our final success is certain. Jehovah's unerring word has declared it. But it may be accelerated, or it may be retarded, by you. This is a solemn consideration. How much soever Jesus may be disregarded, forgotten and rejected among this people now; He is the King, and will surely reign. All nations shall be blessed in Him, and all nations shall call Him blessed.

THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY'S JUBILEE.

Isa. liii. 10, 11.

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him: He hath put him to grief. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

If a person were to read for the first time this remarkable chapter, and be asked, "What do you think of the subject here treated of?" he would in all probability tell us, "My impression is, that the writer is giving the history of some individual, with whose life and character he must have been well acquainted: he must have seen a good deal of him, otherwise he could not possibly have entered so minutely into the details of the events, which are here related." Isaiah indeed presents us here with Messiah's sufferings, death and reign, in a manner so striking and perfect, that the sketch looks more like a historical narrative than a prophecy; and if the picture was drawn—(as it can be proved it was)—seven hundred years before the crucifixion of Christ, it clearly shows, that

Isaiah wrote by divine inspiration; for never did a king or prophet or saint appear on earth before Christ, to whom the prophecy could be applicable. But when we read the history of our Saviour's passion and death; every sentence recorded by the prophet, corresponds to some portion of his extraordinary and blessed history.

The words I have selected for our meditations this evening show, that the Death of Christ was

I. AN EVENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DESIGNS OF GOD.

II. THAT IT WAS AN ATONEMENT FOR SIN.

III. THAT IMPORTANT RESULTS WERE TO ARISE FROM IT.

Let us pray that a solemn feeling may influence our souls, while we meditate on the momentous event, with which our eternal interests, our faith and hope are so intimately connected.

1. We consider that *the death of Jesus Christ was an event in accordance with the designs of God.* It was permitted by Him, for important reasons. The Holy Spirit by the mouth of the prophet declares—"*It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief.*" To the common observer of events, it did not appear so. Every one in Jerusalem knew, that the Pharisees and rulers of the Jews regarded JESUS with great prejudice and hatred; because he had boldly rebuked their vices, and exposed the insincerity of their religious profession. It was well known, that they wanted only some plausible pretext for inculpat-

ing him, and eagerly sought for an opportunity to destroy him. No sooner were their malicious plans brought to maturity, than they seized him like a common criminal,—dragged him before the tribunal of the high priest;—who, upon the evidence of false witnesses, convicted him as guilty of blasphemy; and the very next morning they pursued him to the hall of the unprincipled heathen governor; who, against his own better conviction, condemned him to be crucified, for rebellion against the Roman government. Such was the base transaction of men in power. The righteous and holy one perished, in human eyes, through the wicked malice of his enemies. But the Almighty God had his counsel in it. Can a righteous man perish without His taking knowledge of it, when we are assured that the very hairs of his head are numbered? No;—it was foretold that it should be so: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" "It pleased the Lord to bruise him." The Father not only allowed him to suffer death; but he is represented here as inflicting it. "Bruising" is an allusion to the death of Messiah, —an agonizing death. Turn for a moment to the dreadful scene on Calvary. There he hangs,—extended probably for six dismal hours on the accursed tree. Read what the Psalmist says of his agonies in those dread moments: "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint, my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to

my jaws: thou hast brought me into the dust of death." But bodily sufferings are not the keenest. Mental agonies surpass them in every respect. So,—to make the measure of Messiah's sufferings full,—God the Father allowed his holy soul to be smitten and afflicted.

My text expresses these fearful pangs in the short sentence,—"He hath put him to grief." Such grief and sorrow never fell upon a child of man. Some of us doubtless know what it is, to lose all peace and composure of mind. Some of you perhaps have felt the mental pain and restlessness, when conscience is awake and convinces the sinner of guilt. We have heard of individuals who have fallen into a dreary, dejected state of mind, whom nothing could comfort. No friend could soothe and compose the horrified soul, because it was dark,—deserted by God. No ray of grace,—no gleam of hope shone through the clouds that brooded over it. What mental distress and anxiety are produced by one slight touch on the nervous system! Brethren, all these sorrows and distresses, but in an incomparably aggravated degree, were endured by the Son of God, in those dismal hours, when the light of the Father's countenance was withdrawn,—when he could no longer lay hold of the sweet consoling word, "Abba, Father;" but could only cry,—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And there was a reason for all this. Do you know why the eternal Son of God was brought thus low into the dust, so that we hear him complain, "I am a worm and no man: be not far from me; for trouble is near: for there

is none to help?" The prophet gives answer: "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." Is it true,—can it be,—that He should thus suffer,—the innocent for the guilty,—the just for the unjust? Yes! it is a glorious and eternal truth.

II. It is worth while,—we cannot be better employed on such a day, when we commemorate the death of Christ,—than to make particular enquiry, *for what specific reason He laid down his life?* Look at the text. Here it is plainly stated: "*When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed.*" In the original, the soul signifies also the life. So then, He laid down his life and suffered the most fearful death, as a sacrifice for sin. And for what sins? Yours and mine;—the sins of the whole world, God has laid on him,—the innocent Lamb,—the iniquities of us all. This is that wonderful fact, which calls forth the adorations and praises of seraphic beings before the throne. God must become incarnate, suffer and die; to deliver man from guilt and condemnation. It is not enough to know in a general way, that Christ died to save sinners. The subject demands close reflection. It is desirable to know, so far as we can ascertain by the light of Scripture, why God did save sinners in this way. Why was it necessary for the Son of God to become incarnate, suffer and die upon the cross for their salvation? Why was it not enough, that sinners should repent and reform, in order to their being pardoned? I reply:—There is a weighty reason, as far as God is concerned. He is a

holy God who abhors sin. He hates it with perfect hatred. He is a righteous Governor of the Universe; and he demands perfect obedience to the law he has given. He has threatened death upon all, who break this law. Have we not all broken this law and incurred its penalty? If God then were to receive the guilty back into his favour, upon the sinner's repentance; and if He did this without other satisfaction, I ask,—Where would be His truth, in threatening punishment to the guilty? How would his holiness in the hatred of sin appear,—or his justice in punishing sin? Could any Government be carried on upon such principles? Why, all would end in confusion and demoralisation. If the conscience of any of us were awakened to a sense of our guilt and God's holiness, is it likely that we should come to rest, if we had nothing but repentance to offer? Ah! it would be poor consolation; it would be "daubing" as the prophet says, "with untempered mortar." The fact is, that conscience ever frightens and drives us back from God; so long as we have nothing but good wishes, good feelings, contrition and doings of our own, to bring. But now, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world!" "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood; to declare his righteoussness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." "He died the just for (in the place of) the unjust, that he might bring us to God."

Brethren, have any of you a clear, a deep view of

what sin is, and an anxious desire to be rid of its burden? I would advise you to dwell upon the atonement of Christ, as your hope, your joy, your life. Look upon the fact in this simple scriptural light; *Jesus Christ died on Calvary as my representative.* Don't allow sceptic, infidel notions, to disturb your mind and turn you away from the wonderful sight. It is full of comfort. Think of the dignity of the sufferer, the extremity of his sufferings, and the consequences of his mediation. Could the justice of the law be more strikingly displayed, even if the whole human race had perished? Could God's holiness shine in brighter rays? Could his hatred of sin be more fearfully displayed, than it has been in the story of Calvary,—where the Beloved of the Father must bleed and die? This is a price of reconciliation, great beyond our conception. Now we know, that God loves us,—loves the world. Here is the cause of deliverance from condemnation: but—what is equally glorious,—here is the remedy for healing our souls. He died; and his blood cleanseth from all sin. "His name is JESUS, for he shall save his people from their sins." "Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

III. We now come to consider *the death of Christ in its glorious results.* My text presents these effects in a general way. They are expressed in these

words: "*He shall see his seed: he shall prolong his days: and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul; and shall be satisfied.*"

One striking figure is here joined to another; showing the great and glorious results of the scene, which took place on that memorable day, on Calvary's blood-stained brow. It has been said, that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church; but in a higher sense is the blood of Christ the expansive, invigorating principle,—the life of the Church. "Thy children shall be born unto thee like the dew out of the womb of the morning." "In the Seed of the woman all the nations of the earth shall be blessed." It was the cross of Christ, in which alone the Apostles gloried. Through this, they won hearts, and converted sinners by thousands. We need but refer to the first part of Church history in the Acts, to see, with what wonderful rapidity the Gospel was spread through the Roman Empire. Such a thing never was seen since the world began. The seed cast abroad did indeed bring forth a hundredfold. It proved to demonstration, that Christ was not a dead but a living Saviour. His days are eternal. It proved, that His death had answered the end proposed. The pleasure of the Lord,—by which we are to understand the salvation, the restoring of mankind,—did indeed prosper in the hands of this illustrious One. The Father had delivered this commission into the hands of the Son;—"Be thou my Shepherd. Go and gather the lost sheep

into my heavenly fold. All power in heaven and earth I have delivered to thee. Go and reign among my enemies. Conquer, subdue rebellious mankind under my banner. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, and in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness, and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things." Truly, the vision which Isaiah beheld from far, is realized. The death of Christ has become the life of the world. The Gospel is moving onward: and wherever it finds admittance, it proves a fertilizing stream, turning the barren wilderness into a fruitful field. There is something sublime in the words; —"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." His holy life,—and especially the last scene of it,—was a course of sorrow, grief and agonies. But the Son of man endured; and drank the cup of affliction to the dregs. He looked to the end,—to the fruit that would grow out of his sowing in tears. Now he has finished the work. He sits on the throne of glory; and from thence beholds with satisfaction and delight the travail of his soul. Every soul converted, every sinner repenting and crying for mercy, is an object of his delight. He beholds, in his recovery, a sweet fruit of his bitter pangs,—a prisoner ransomed by his blood. He beholds the victory and final triumph of his Church;—death and Satan's kingdom destroyed;—His own kingdom of grace and glory established. He had a sight of all these glorious results. He was satisfied, and cried "It is FINISHED." The Captain of our Salvation died a conqueror:—

like that great leader in an earthly conflict, who, falling in the battle-field mortally wounded, learned at last the successful issue of the fight; and when this report was given, was satisfied, and a few minutes after, expired.

I intended to dwell further on the special blessings which are derived from the death of Christ, but I must stop.

In the Jewish dispensation, a festival was, by a Divine ordinance, celebrated once a year; and the day was called the day of atonement. In reference to this festival, we read in Lev. xxiii. 27: "On the tenth day of the seventh month, there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be a holy convocation unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord." To this time, the Jews observe this day in a solemn manner, as a day of humiliation.

And in the xxv. chapter of the same book, we read of another festival, called the Jubilee; which was to be celebrated every fiftieth year. "Thou shalt number seven Sabbaths of years unto thee; seven times seven years; and the space of the seven Sabbaths of years, shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day;—in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land." This festival, which lasted a whole year, was accompanied with gracious privileges, benefiting especially the poor and distressed. Every slave was freed as soon as the sound of the trumpet was heard. The

debtor was released. He who had forfeited his property, returned to his patrimony. There is no doubt that the festival was typical of the superior spiritual blessings which were to be communicated by Christ. The Gospel trumpet, wherever sounded, sets free the longing prisoner; and restores to the poor, their heavenly inheritance.

There is something very striking in the peculiar arrangements of the festival. It was to commence with the day of atonement,—that very festival which the Christian Church continues to commemorate on Good Friday,—when the great atonement was made, when the Lamb of God was offered on Calvary, probably on the same spot where Abraham was commanded to offer up his son Isaac. How very appropriate, that this should be a day of humiliation to us, when we think of our sins, and what bitter pangs and agonies they cost our Redeemer!—but likewise a day of joy, a blessed jubilee!—for the Christian's comfort, peace, hope and joy are derived from the death of Christ. The Gospel trumpet sounded as soon as that great act was accomplished. A Father's love,—a Saviour's grace, are now proclaimed. Sinners are invited to the kingdom of heaven—upon this ground and foundation, the cross of Christ.

You are aware, my hearers, that the Church Missionary Society, after having been engaged for fifty years in the noble work of proclaiming the Gospel to heathen nations, is celebrating a jubilee year. A small band of holy, devoted men founded that noble So-

ciety, fifty years since. It was undertaken in faith. It had a very small beginning. The names of Scott, Wilberforce, Venn, Simeon, and Pratt, are identified with its first existence. They had many trials and conflicts to pass through, many a frown and ill report to bear from high quarters, in its infancy. But those men of faith went onward undismayed. Their object was noble. They were united in a work, which had the glory of God and the salvation of the heathen world as its object. They kept steadily to their purpose; firmly believing that it was a desirable work, a solemn sacred duty laid on Christians, and expressly commanded by Christ. They laboured in hope; under a deep conviction, that the blessings of the Gospel are the common property of all nations.

And what has been the result? It has been great and satisfactory beyond their expectations. The Church Missionary Society has been advancing prosperously; and thousands and tens of thousands have reason to thank God for its establishment and labours. It has, at the present time, in one hundred and two stations, one hundred and fifty clergymen labouring in different parts of the world. The Missions are found in the cold regions of the North-west American Indians, in New Zealand, in every part of India, in China, Sierra Leone, North and Eastern Africa. This Society has in its service, above eleven hundred teachers, catechists, and readers. The late statistical returns show, that eighty thousand souls are under instruction, who have renounced idolatry, and thirteen

thousand communicants, sincere, humble, consistent, believers in Christ.

The Society commenced its labours with the humble income of £2000 in the first year. It went on prospering; as its real character, its object and labours became better known and appreciated; and the annual income, for these last five years, has been on an average £100,000. A splendid instance indeed of Christian zeal and liberality in a good cause! But if the amount were doubled,—God grant it may!—I can assure you the field is large,—more than enough,—for extended labour. "*The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few.*" God has richly blessed the labourers. Where the ground has been cultivated longest, we almost invariably find success most striking. Witness the thirty thousand converts in New Zealand. That island has in fact been rescued from the wildest condition of savage life; and is likely to become one of the brightest gems in the crown of our gracious Queen. So again, in Southern India,—where our brethren rejoice in hundreds and thousands of converts annually; and one district of Tinevelly alone exhibits the cheering sight of forty thousand converts. China too is opening to the Gospel.

Whereas, in the infancy of the Society, it received no helping hand from the Ecclesiastical authorities; the whole bench of Bishops now patronize its efforts, and the excellent Archbishop Sumner has a few weeks since shewn his attachment to the Society, by recommending my friend, Mr. Smith, late Missionary in

China, to be nominated Bishop of Hongkong. Let our labourers be increased in North India; let them receive the cordial aid and co-operation of the English communities in their stations; and I feel persuaded, the same success which attended the faithful labours of our brethren in the South, will be granted us in these parts, ere long. The good seed has been sown, and the ground is daily getting better prepared, for a more extensive harvest.

Let me remind you of a remarkable fact, which I believe is too much lost sight of;—the reflex influence, which the labours of the Church Missionary Society exercise upon Christians at large. When the fathers of this Society commenced their labours, the state of Christianity in England was low indeed. "Darkness covered the land." A pious, devoted clergyman, who preached the Gospel faithfully, was a rare sight.

The Church Missionary Society has, under the Divine blessing, been one of the main instruments to bring life, health, and vigour into the Church. Clergymen and lay Christians have since learned, what is the duty of a Protestant Reformed Church; and the more faithfully they have discharged it, the more have Divine blessings abounded at home.

The same has been the case here. What was the state of religion and morals in Calcutta, fifty,—sixty years since?—I mean among Europeans. It was deplorable to a degree. Blessed be God, a great change for the better has been effected in Calcutta, and all over the country: and here too, the Church Mis-

sionary Society has contributed no small share in effecting it. Had it not been for their numerous agents dispersed abroad over the land, no Churches would have been built, no stated ministry would have been established, no sound of the Gospel would have been heard, in this station of Burdwan, and many others.

These are considerations which call for gratitude, and gratitude of a tangible kind;—when such a Society is celebrating a jubilee festival.

Brethren, the Church is looking forward to another jubilee. I mean the millennial jubilee. God rested on the seventh day from His work of Creation. Well nigh six thousand years, the Church has been labouring, sighing, groaning in sorrow and persecution. But a brighter day is coming. Then the glorious result of the death of the Son of God will be fully known. It will be the time of refreshment before the face of the Lord. Therefore says His word; "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ; and shall reign with him a thousand years." Brethren, let our motto be that of the Apostle, Gal. vi. 14; "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Here is the sinner's hope and safety. May we be found in Him, relying on his atonement for pardon, righteousness and life! Ere long, we shall see that our labour of love and hope was not in vain.

THE HARVEST PAST, AND THE SUMMER ENDED.

Jer. viii. 20.

The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

THE occasion which led me to the selection of this text was this: I passed, a few months since, along the rice-fields, and was struck by the appearance of the plant; large tracts being parched, and burned up as it were, by a long continued drought. Alas! thought I, the hopes of the poor people are disappointed: their labour of ploughing and sowing seems to be frustrated by the mysterious dealings of Providence, which has shut up the clouds from pouring down the fertilizing shower. Well may the disappointed husbandman say in the sorrow of his heart, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

This solemn text is very applicable, in its literal sense, to the distressing condition, to which many thousands of our fellow-beings around us have been reduced, by an almost entire failure of the harvest during the past year.

This consideration led me to make a comparison between the sad, distressing condition of thousands of sufferers, the withered appearance of the fields;—and the spiritual state of those unfortunate individuals,

whose lives are barren as to the fruits of holiness; upon the ground of whose heart, every seed of corn—of the word,—every grain of truth,—appears to have been withered and blasted in its growth. The comparison is as strikingly true as it is deplorable. In one point only there is a marked difference between the two. While, as I mentioned before, the harvest was lost; the withered state of the field crops was caused by the want of rain, withheld by an inscrutable providence: the spiritual barrenness of nominal Christians must entirely be ascribed to their unfaithfulness. The fault lies at their own door.

There are those upon whom God has for many a year bestowed much care. Mercies in providence, mercies of grace,—have been showered down upon them. The word of eternal life was sown into their hearts from their early childhood. Seasons of peculiar visitation arrived; when, by their deep convictions it was evident, that the heavenly Husbandman was engaged giving all advantage to the good seed, and preparing them for his service. Then again, there came seasons, when the pruning knife of sharp trials was applied by Him, to cut off the wild branches of nature's growth. But all efforts of mercy and judgment seem to have been spent fruitlessly upon them. And in regard to their hopeless, unfruitful condition; the complaint of the Lord is justly applicable;—"What could have been done more for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"

You perceive, my dear hearers, there is a most serious lesson in the text: let us reflect upon it in reference to our own spiritual state. It is right, it is our bounden duty, that we should do so. If the contents of it are not applicable to any of us in their fulness, now; it is owing to the long-suffering of God, who will not that any should perish. But the time is short! and we must remind the careless, that if they permit the remaining days to run out unimproved, oh! what will be their feelings when, with eternal ruin before them, hopeless despair will put the words into their mouth, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Let us ascertain the meaning of the expressions in the text.

I. THE HARVEST AND SUMMER.

II. THE HARVEST PAST, AND THE SUMMER ENDED.

III. THE HOPELESS PROSPECT: "WE ARE NOT SAVED."

I. These terms "*harvest*" and "*summer*" need explanation. The plaintive cry of the text was in the first instance uttered by the prophet Jeremiah, with reference to the hopeless condition of the Jews, when Nebuchadnezzar had invaded the country, and was approaching Jerusalem. The Jews had formed a league with the king of Egypt, who, dreading the advance of the Chaldæan conqueror, engaged to send an army to arrest his progress. But the promised support did not arrive in time. The season passed away: and the hostile army in the meanwhile moved on towards the capital of the land. In this emergency, the na-

tion being disappointed of its hope; for Jehovah, whom they had provoked to anger by their sins, was against them,—the prophet bemoaned the fate of his people, and cried out: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

In a figurative sense, the term "harvest" signifies sometimes, the season, when all means of grace are at an end. Our Saviour in explaining the parable of the sower, said, "the harvest is the end of the world;" —that great day of separation, when "the wicked and every thing that offendeth, shall be gathered, bound up in bundles and cast into the eternal fire."

In the present case the "harvest and summer" signify the seasons, afforded us by God, for providing for the necessities of our souls. As he has appointed from the beginning of the creation, the regular seasons of spring, summer, autumn and winter; which will continue in their wonted succession, so long as the earth shall remain; so, in like manner, has our heavenly Father afforded us certain stated seasons and opportunities, in which we are invited to avail ourselves of his grace, through means by which we may gather that which is true provision for the soul, and which will fit us to become heirs of heaven. Youth, the spring of human life, is, in an especial sense, the favoured season, when this important work is to be done: for thus says the voice of Wisdom, "Those that seek me early, shall find me." Young people who, while the heart is tender, follow the Divine Guide; and lay up a store of wisdom and grace, when

all the faculties of the mind and body are fresh, susceptible and vigorous,—have an unspeakable advantage, far above others,—who devote the bloom of their days to the world and its vanities, and begin to seek the grace of the Lord in later days.

Manhood—the summer of life—is likewise the time for maturing the whitening field for a better world, and for a plentiful harvest. Those are happy, who have passed from youth into this more advanced stage, with a store of experience in Divine things. When the first fruits were devoted to the Lord, the believer now matured, progresses with firm steps in the ways of the Lord. Happy, and a blessing to others, is such an one, in every relation of life he holds. As a parent, he will be a pattern of piety and goodness to his beloved children and household. As a man of business, in the public walks of life, his character will stand forth, with an excellence that will commend itself to the approbation and admiration of others. He is one of the few—who in every respect can be called good men—"the excellent of the earth:"—why?—Because a good foundation has been laid in youth. The heart is influenced by the highest, purest principle,—love to God and man.

But suppose a person has allowed his youthful years thoughtlessly to be spent in worldly follies. The summer of life, manhood, is still the time to gather that, which will render him rich indeed. He has lost much: but it is not too late. He will indeed find that change,—by which the heart is turned away

from sin to holiness,—far more difficult, than he would have found it in youth. Nevertheless, if he be in earnest, we may yet hold out to him every hope of success. All depends upon the view he takes of his case. If he receives a lively impression, that the golden harvest of the fruits of the Spirit is of incomparably higher importance, than the gathering a treasure for the short journey of life:—if, with a judgment divinely enlightened, he perceives how one blessing received from Jesus—such as the peace of God, which passeth all understanding,—excels all other earthly enjoyments taken together;—attended as they are by uneasiness, fear and a bad conscience;—then, I say, he will resolve at once to bid farewell to the world—and gather henceforth treasures which go with him to heaven. Be in earnest, and God will grant you success. Difficulties will be overcome: mountains will sink down into plains before you.

There is another stage, the autumn of life, which is closely followed by winter's dreariness, the white hoarfrost and death of nature. May old age still be considered as the season for gathering? My text will not allow me to extend the privilege much further. *It stops short with the summer and autumn; and when these are allowed to pass*—when no harvest of grace is then gathered—not a handful of ripe corn laid up;—then alas! it is generally too late. I say generally,—for we should not venture to circumscribe the power of Divine grace; since God commands his servants to invite labourers into his vineyard, even at the

eleventh hour; and some have, at the hour of extremity, been plucked as brands from the burning.

The main feature then, of our first proposition is this:—A merciful Creator has given us life and health and many blessings, with this great object in view, that we should employ them in the chief thing,—that of gathering a harvest of Divine knowledge and grace, to fit us for a better state.

II. We consider *the harvest lost and the summer ended.* Here we again cast a glance at the historical facts, with which the text is connected. The Israelites were not helped; because they trusted in Pharaoh, king of Egypt, instead of relying on the living God. They leaned on a broken reed, instead of resting on the Rock of ages. God not only did not help them, but forsook them, and delivered them into the hands of their enemies, as a punishment for their rebellion and wickedness. So they cried in their despair—"The harvest is past, the summer is ended—and we are not saved." What must have been their feelings, when,—instead of seeing the promised auxiliary army hastening along for their relief from the south,—the fierce bands of the Chaldæans made their appearance, on the crest of the hills to the northward. The prophet himself describes their feelings of despair in the most pathetic manner a few verses before our text "The Lord God has put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the Lord. We looked for peace, but no good came, and for a time of health, and behold trouble. The

snorting of his (the Chaldæan's) horses was heard from Dan: the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of the strong ones: for they are come, and have devoured the land, and all that is in it; the city, and those that dwell therein."

Their harvest was indeed past, their summer was ended. Destruction, captivity, an entire national overthrow, were at hand. The question now arises:—in what manner are we to understand this warning declaration, as regards the spiritual state of an individual? Under what circumstances may his state be considered as hopeless, as was that of the Jews on the eve of the captivity?

I answer;—in the first place, when an individual in the possession of many spiritual privileges, and after many solemn warnings, continues as he was before; unconcerned about the interests of his soul. These privileges we consider to be,—pious parents, a Christian education, a faithful ministry, the acquaintance and friendship of those who fear the Lord, the example of consistent Christians before us:—then also, the direct means of grace, a knowledge of the leading doctrines of salvation, opportunities of reading the Bible, joining with God's people in his house, Baptism, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Add to these,—the Divine voice in His providences,—alarming circumstances,—sickness,—the death of friends or beloved children,—long continued trials,—and above all, the direct work of God upon the heart, rousing up the sinner, giving clear views of his great

danger—working convictions of guilt, and a desire for holiness and happiness. But who can count up the numberless variety of ways and means which a merciful God employs, in a direct or indirect way; in his more secret operations upon the heart, or in the more obvious and palpable ways of his providences?

Brethren, these things are not done in a corner. Every person must confess, and the obdurate sinner must confess with shame and confusion,—"An Omnipotent hand has led me from my childhood. The eye of an Omniscient God has pursued me in the darkest recesses, where I tried to hide myself. I feel I cannot disengage myself from that grasp of the Almighty hand. I must either yield myself up to him in humble obedience, or perish." Now, if such a person has,—in defiance of all Divine calls, invitations and warnings, continued to cast away these precious means,—abused them, by acting in direct opposition to his better convictions; and done despite to the Spirit of truth; the consequence is, that he will be hardened to a fearful degree; and this hardness is generally accompanied with blindness—a total inability to feel and to understand the truth. Then he hates the Gospel. Then he can no longer be convinced. Talk to him of the most affecting things—the love of God—the curse of damnation,—the dreadful scenes of the judgment day:—he is not touched; he will explain all away, as extravagance or nonsense. He avoids hearing any thing that may rouse his conscience. Perhaps his views are not always the same. It is impossible

they can be. He has his misgivings. The thunder of Sinai may pierce his ears for a moment—but will he humble himself? will he cry for mercy to an offended God? No! he thinks it is of no use. My brethren, this is the awful state of mind in a sinner, when it may be said of him—he is past hope—"his harvest is past, his summer is ended."

In an advanced state of life likewise, when nothing has been done by the hoary sinner to gather treasure for heaven; and every thing has been done, that unfits him for that happy place; the mournful words may be applied to him. Perhaps he has been living for years in the practice of some notorious crime or sin. Perhaps he is an habitual Sabbath-breaker or adulterer—neglecting the house of God, insulting his Maker by unblushingly transgressing his sacred commandments. Is it reasonable to expect that such a person will be converted in old age, who thus dishonours the outward means of grace? I believe there are no facts on record, of persons of this description having been turned to God. "Their harvest is past:" and another is about to be reaped!—"tribulation and anguish upon every one that doeth evil." A young tree can be bent: an oak will not yield even to the storm.

The time of sickness and death is, lastly and prominently, that, to which the text applies. When the command is issued by the Lord of heaven, "Cut down this unfruitful tree, why cumbereth it the ground?"—when the angel of death is about to sever the slender thread which unites the immortal spirit with its frail

tenement,—when at that time the dying sinner awaking, as it were, from a long dream; reflects for the first time upon his life that is past,—the consequences that must necessarily follow,—and the place to which he is about to go:—then indeed is often heard the cry of despair—"The harvest is past; my time of grace, my time of preparation is lost. I am dying—and I am perishing in my sins." The retrospect is distressing. The prospect is alarming, dark and terrible. Speak to such a person of the mercy of God. It does him no good. It affords him no comfort. He knows—he feels—that mercy is not a word for him: because he has a thousand times rejected it. Mercy, peace, comfort in death, are only the privilege of those who sought and found them in days of health at the cross of the Saviour; who fought against sin with the sword of the Spirit; who have by a life of activity, overcome the wicked one; growing in grace, and meetness for heaven. Holiness, spirituality of mind, love, humility and other graces, cannot be put on as a garment in the hour of death, to cover the hideous deformities which disfigure the soul. These can only be washed out in the blood of the Lamb. No, brethren; these graces are wrought into the soul through a process which requires days, months, years to finish. When death approaches, all should be already done.

Hence the unutterable wretchedness of those who die unprepared; who squander away the precious seasons of the spring and summer of life, unimproved.

These seasons lost, are irrecoverable. They can never be renewed.

My brethren, are these not plain and obvious facts? —and does the feeling not sometimes cause you a degree of uneasiness—"My time is passing away, I am getting old in years and old in sin,—and I have not yet found that wherewith to comfort myself in death?" Oh, lose not another opportunity of obtaining it,—now while the sun shines, and while the summer day of the Gospel is still smiling on you. We may live to see the beginning of a new year, and not live to see the end of it.

III. The last point to be considered is, *the hopeless prospect* of those who in the hour of extremity cry out—"*I am not saved.*" The Jews despaired of deliverance, when they saw the unrelenting foe encompassing their city. Such will be the end and the dreadful disappointment of those, who have trusted in an arm of flesh, and worshipped an idol of their own making. Satan the great antitype of the tyrant of Babylon, will do all he can to keep up the delusion of those, who are under his sway, to the last;—till the very gulf of destruction is at last opening before their eyes. "I am not saved!" Is not this cry of despair, a faithful picture of the dying sinner, when he is about to go hence—when all his vain hopes, derived from this world, fade away? No Redeemer is then at hand!—only an enemy, who has no mercy.

"We are not saved!" Is our God then unfaithful to his promises? No. But that treacherous heart

would not accept of them. "We are not saved!" Is there then no Saviour to be had at the hour of extremity? Yes! But not for him who has no heart to believe. "We are not saved!" Is there then no heaven to receive the fallen? Yes. But only as repenting, justified and sanctified sinners; whereas the cry of that dying impenitent is like the roaring of the criminal, who dreads the impending punishment, when he is led forth to the place of execution.

The words were originally uttered by the Prophet Jeremiah. Like him, the minister who sees numbers of professed Christians, who have for years been sitting under his ministry unconverted, unimproved, still living on in the same worldly, undecided manner; has cause to mourn and complain: "These three years have I come seeking fruit from this tree in vain." It is painful to observe how, apparently at least, all labours, all exhortations are thrown away upon such people.

But, brethren, do you know what the negative "not saved," implies, in a positive sense? It signifies, —to be damned, destroyed; removed for ever from the presence of God and his grace. It is being consigned to a place so awful, that any suffering here is mitigation, in comparison with hell's torments. It is to go to a place so dark and fearful, that the gloomiest dungeon would be a palace in comparison with it. Now just glance at the contrast; and consider the feelings of the righteous man at the hour of his death. Such a one said, "The time of my departure is at hand. I

have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day."

My dear hearers, here is a solemn lesson for us all. It is not I who can teach it to you effectually. The Lord of heaven alone can apply it to your hearts. I have not put it into the prophetic words; but I have been unfolding their meaning to you; and you have now had the truth they contain, faithfully set before you.

Forasmuch then, as your present existence is one that should be preparatory to a higher state; and this life should be spent by you in gathering a harvest that will be fit for the heavenly garner; let me beseech you to make this a new starting place of life, and to labour more diligently in that important cause, and towards that great end. How unwearied in labour is the husbandman to obtain the blessings of a harvest! And what a glorious harvest is before us to be reaped—pardon, justification, adoption into the family of God! And if these be sought, and received in a tender heart, there too, grow up the fruits of the Spirit,—faith, love, meekness, humility, holiness. Oh, let us gather heavenly manna, like Israel in the wilderness. We need it for our journey. We need it in troubles; and we need it above all in the hour of death.

Again; reflect, brethren, on the awful consequences of spiritual idleness and worldliness and impenitence.

We all resemble the Jews in one thing,—in the unspeakable privilege of having a divine revelation and a divinely appointed ministry. Oh, beware, lest you resemble them, in the dreadful abuse of them, of which they became guilty. Their great sin before the captivity, was idolatry with all its corrupting effects, and a stubborn unbelief. Are there no idolaters among us, who love the world more than God? Is that practical unbelief not the prevailing sin and curse of professed Christians in our own days?

Brethren, a good conscience is a precious blessing. Peace in the heart is a most valuable gift. This is the inheritance of God's people, who "labour for the meat that endureth unto eternal life." Are you in possession of these blessings? Can they ever dwell in the hearts of those, who have allowed their time to pass unimproved; whose spring and summer of life are nearly gone, and yet no sowing to the Spirit hitherto, that of the Spirit they may reap life eternal? Shall the remaining days be wasted in like manner? Will you not be wise? Will you begin to be in earnest about your everlasting peace, only when your sun is setting, and you perceive at last in reality, but too late, what it is to be lost?

Then a dark gloom will be spread over your mind, cheered no longer by a ray of grace. Then you will remember with grief those mis-spent hours, the precious seasons, in the house of God and elsewhere, unimproved. Then your conscience will at last be awakened, and rise like an armed man to dismay you.

Then perhaps, you will pray in earnest for grace and mercy; but heaven will be shut up. Then you will understand the real meaning of the words—if they reach not your hearts now—"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

Brethren, let us now turn the last words from negative into positive; and embody them in the earnest, heartfelt prayer—"Lord, grant me thy salvation for Christ's sake. May my heart be enriched with this heavenly treasure, and the wilderness turned into a fruitful field this very day." Then He will hear, and send an answer of peace. Let no one go from the consideration of these solemn words, without the impression engraven on the heart, "I must do the great work now, without delay."

"A charge to keep, I have, a God to glorify,
A never-dying soul to save, and fit it for the sky."

Then the Lord will do something great for you. As by the plentiful showers that fell during the past week, some parts of the crops were saved, to the great joy of the people,—who may still expect a harvest, after their hope of it was nearly past;—Israel's God will, upon your earnest prayer, send showers of his grace upon you, that you may yet bring forth heavenly fruit which shall be to his glory. The Lord grant us all to seek and find these blessings in a day of salvation; and prepare us to be gathered at last among the number of His elect!

BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.

Rev. ii. 10.

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

THAT the sincere and devoted follower of Christ has, in Him, a kind, attentive and sympathizing Master, —is clearly shewn by this solemn address, which I have selected as my text for the present occasion.*

While our Lord was still with his disciples on earth, he told them on a certain occasion;—"I know my sheep, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." Whilst the flock gathered into his fold is dear to his heart, and he gives to the weakest of them a sweet promise,—"None shall pluck them out of my hand;" the Text is part of an Epistle addressed from heaven by our Lord, after his return to the Father; and in it we are assured, that the faithful minister who is doing his Lord's work in the right spirit, is, in an especial manner, valued, remembered and loved by him. He is labouring in his Master's name; he is endeavouring to gather the lonely sheep in a heathen desert into his fold; he is doing this by his especial sanction and commission. It is an arduous task. It is a trying, fatiguing labour, replete with self-denial and suffering. A word of sympathy is desirable, a word of approbation and encouragement. Oh, how comforting is such a word! Are we to expect it from

* The Church Missionary Conference at Calcutta, Wednesday Feb. 25th, 1852.

the world?—They have no sympathy to spare for the service of Jesus. The Indian world, though it be partly a civilized and Christian world, is not disposed to encourage him. Why should they? They all care for their own, and not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But frequently it is the case, that we must not expect much sympathy and encouragement even from those who are of the household of faith. Where then are we to go? Hear a word of sweet comfort. Is Christ's true servant left quite to himself for that inward support he needs? No: he is not left alone. There is One,—the faithful and true Witness,—whose voice is still heard in the Church;—yea, and it is heard in the midst of heathen deserts. He says,—"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience." "Fear not; I know thee by name." Oh, brethren, you know Him too; and have heard his gracious voice. What can be more cheering, more heart-stirring, than to hear our good and kind Master speak to us thus? What can be more calculated to make us earnest, sober, humble, zealous in labouring for souls, than this call from him, whom we acknowledge as our Lord,—from whom we have received an important trust,—and to whom we shall eventually have to render our final account;—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life?" These words contain—

I. A SOLEMN CALL.

II. A DELIGHTFUL PROMISE.

I. *A solemn call.* May we each of us receive grace to regard it as addressed individually to us, and we shall

not listen without deriving a heavenly blessing from it. The sayings of Jesus maintain their excellency and evince the power of truth and grace, now; as fully as they did, when first uttered by him. This epistle was addressed to a good and holy man. The manner in which our Lord mentions him, proves that he was, what a faithful minister should be;—heart and soul devoted to His service. He resembled his Master, as much as a poor mortal can be brought to resemble so perfect a pattern. He was a tried, afflicted man; and suffered much persecution from the Jews. He was a poor man; but rich in the graces of the Spirit. A sweet spirit of humility and love shines in the character, which the finger of the omniscient Searcher of hearts has here sketched out. Many believe, that this eminent saint and angel of the Church of Smyrna, was Polycarp;—that faithful martyr,—who suffered in his old age; and who, when desired by the Roman Governor to deny Christ, made this noble confession;—"Eighty and six years have I served my Lord Christ; and He has never offended me. How can I be faithless to Him who has redeemed me?" In the prospect of these fiery trials, the Lord informed his devoted servant;—"The devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried: and ye shall suffer tribulation ten days:" but at the same time, he gave him the encouraging word;—"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer:"—"let it be thy chief care to be faithful; this is all thou hast to do; and for the rest, which is yet to come,—the trials, the persecutions, the safety and growth and prosperity of

my Church,—I will care, I will provide. Trust to my hand: look to me and my promise. If you continue faithful; you will not suffer eventually, but gain a great prize." Doubtless his reply, after listening to these words, so full of encouragement and hope was;—"I will, by the help of my God, continue faithful. I am ready to do thy will, and suffer according to thy will; if so be, that Christ may be glorified in my body and spirit."

I need hardly remind you, my brethren, of a certain act, which realizes a word like that contained in my text, and makes it meat and drink,—a source of spiritual comfort, nourishment and strength to the soul. That act is faith. I believe that my Lord directs a call to me in this instance: it becomes therefore a personal affair. I have here to do with my Lord, and therefore all other considerations cease. "Be *thou* faithful." It is very pointed, considered in its application. We must put the emphasis upon the pronoun *thou*. His eye is on me: and has he not a right to make this demand on his servant, whom he has engaged, and to whom he has promised a great reward? The idea of a servant, or a soldier, is here brought before our mind. He is the servant of a prince; and if faithful, he will ever be ready to brave danger and death for his master. A Christian, in whatever rank of life, however meek and humble,—must be willing to serve Christ, and to fight the good fight of faith. But to the angel of a Church, the pastor of a flock, this charge had a fuller and more comprehensive import; inasmuch as his whole life is to be spent, and all his time and talents are to be

employed, in the service of his Lord in the Gospel. It is to such, above all, that the charge belongs—"Be thou faithful unto death." What then are some of the prominent features of a faithful servant?

I would, in the first place, mention *a willing mind*, a cheerful readiness to act at his lord's bidding. This, I would say, is the first requisite for a servant. If I engage a person in some branch of business, and I find in him this disposition, I am inclined to take a favourable view of him: he is likely to make a good servant: he may be defective in other respects; he may be inexperienced and unable as yet to do much; still there is hope that he will get on, and soon do better; when I see that he is willing to go where I send him, willing to open his eyes and use his hands as my call requires. This disposition, I say, is the one which honours God. Our Saviour desires a willing people. When Paul first heard his voice, he said,—"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" "Behold! as the eyes of servants look unto the hands of their master, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hands of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord."

Now this is just the opposite from that hesitating, backward and discontented disposition, which shrinks from difficulties, and is easily discouraged by trials and opposition. There are people who discover troubles and difficulties, wherever they go. There is a lion in the way, says the sluggard. Difficulties indeed will come: and Jesus told his disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation:" but then his promise, his

grace is an all-sufficient help; "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Another feature of a faithful servant is, *attachment to his master.* This is the result of a knowledge of his character. Oh, brethren, we may well remind each other, that we have a good, a kind, a sympathizing Master. The more we become acquainted with him, the better we shall like him, and the more we shall admire his transcendent excellency. He knows his own people well. When he hires labourers into his vineyard, he assigns to each, that portion of work which is suited for their respective strength and talents. He is not a hard master; but very tender, very compassionate with his servants. He does not reap where He has not sown; or gather where He has not strown. He does not lay a greater burden on any, than they are able to bear; nor will he expect more labour than they can afford. What he expects is, that we should learn a lesson from his own example. He says, "I loved you before you loved me. Show your attachment to me by good and faithful service." This is the mainspring of faithfulness in the service of Jesus,—"The love of Christ constraineth us." This feeling, this divine principle, made the Apostle what he was;—the earnest, zealous, hard-labouring and successful preacher of the Gospel. Let a Christian be influenced by this spirit of love to his Saviour,—how he will shine! What a sweet fragrance his example spreads around wherever he goes! Let but this spirit animate the chaplain, the missionary, the catechist, and the humble reader; and behold! what

grace, what sweetness, what life is in his preaching and conversation! The heathens even, are struck with it. This is the thing which does good. This is the oil to make the lamp burn brightly;—which revives the light, and makes it fit to disperse heathen gloom and darkness; and be life as well as light to the child of sin, sick and dying in his misery.

Oh, brethren, I do not fear for that man's faithfulness in any duty, who has his eye on his Lord,—who has drunk deep into the spirit of Christ,—who lives near the fountain,—who loves to see often his Master's face; and delights to approach him, with a smiling, open countenance.

But I fear for that man, in whom you discover little of that spirit of love;—little spirituality of mind: where there is a sort of restraint in spiritual exercises, —a coldness which chills one's very heart; or—what is worse,—a careless ease and indifference,—giving the preference to general, light conversation on secular or literary topics; rather than to that, which tends to refresh and edify. So likewise, there cannot but be a sad lack of a spirit of love; when the absence of that dignity, which a walk with God imparts to an advanced believer; is made up by a studied reserve and haughtiness;—which Christians should leave to the man of the world, who has nothing better.

India, my brethren, is, in its present state, a clime very uncongenial to the growth of this heavenly grace: and yet, this it is which marks the true, the genuine servant of Christ. And it is here, above all, it is most wanted. Oh let us cherish this disposition,

Our Master chiefly requires, that we honour him, by a decided attachment to him.

Another mark of a faithful servant is this:—*he will, to the best of his power, do his master's business well.* This is not the place for me to enter upon the line of duties, which the Christian in general, and the Missionary in particular, owes to his Lord. Our knowledge of these, in most instances, goes ahead of our practice; and therefore he calls every follower of his, to greater faithfulness. I have heard good people expressing their regret, that they could do so little, or nothing, in this country for benefiting others. I grant, there are peculiar difficulties to be overcome: but I would advise those who have these feelings, to try once more; and try in the right way;—in the way which Moses did,—"Lord, show me thy way; show me thy glory." Sometimes people look for great things, and important openings for usefulness; and overlook what is lying before them. Little as they may seem to be,—it is in those very things God calls them to show their faithfulness. As applied to us, my brethren;—I am sure, you all know your Master's business. The heathens are perishing day by day. We have been sent to preach the Gospel of Christ,—that they may be rescued from eternal destruction and be saved. This is to be done in every practicable way. We are all agreed on that point. The great thing is that we do it well,—in the right spirit,—embrace every opportunity, and not be hindered by this or that minor secular business,—keep regular times and hours for the different branches,—and be determined to be punctual.

Oh, how much can be done in one week ; when there is regularity, promptness, decision, fervency of spirit, and a habitual impression on the mind,—" I have a great work in hand."

There are many other features which mark the faithful servant. Let it suffice to mention one more only,—*steady perseverance ;*—" Be thou faithful unto death." This is what we need in India,—this land of changes,—of dark heathen gloom,—and relaxing, withering influence.

That dear sainted man, Wybrow, who,—in humility, love and true Missionary zeal,—was one of the brightest patterns of a faithful servant of Christ ; stated in the last letter he wrote to his friends in England : " If I were again to plead the Missionary cause in England, my chief topic would be, that those who long for the extension of Christ's kingdom, must beseech God to give them strong grace for enduring patiently, that they may walk by faith, not by sight." He felt, what every minister and Missionary must feel in this country ;—what, humanly speaking, is the most difficult trial for a good man to pass through. There is the influence of the climate, weakening and relaxing the most healthy and vigorous frame, with its lowering and depressing effect upon the mind. There is the base, degenerated state of man,—the polluted moral atmosphere,—the vices of lying, pilfering, fornication, drunkenness. There is the depressing influence of Satan's power, peculiar to a heathen land,—the trials and disappointments with weak converts. There is the being deprived in a great measure of the cheering and soothing influence of Christian society. Against these.

and many other hostile and adverse influences, you have to bear up, day by day, year by year to the end, —I say it deliberately,—for we have not engaged to labour for five or seven years :—that were comparatively easy :—but to labour so long as life and health last. "Be thou faithful unto death."

Often it is the case, that we are called to toil on without much apparent success. Ah ! I appeal to you who know it from experience, if it is not a sharp trial of patience ? Yes, and I maintain that it requires a greater amount of virtue and Christian grace to stand the conflict,—to bear up until the sun is going down,—than to labour in the freshness of youth, with undaunted zeal, and lay down life under the executioner's hand. Who would not prefer, if natural predilections were consulted, being cut down by one stroke, to dying by inches ?

But I speak after the manner of man ; for Christ is an all-sufficient Saviour ; and when he demands of his servants persevering faithfulness, he will always make his strength perfect in their weakness. Nor do I speak the word to the fearful and faint-hearted, who cast off their armour and fly from the battle-field. Ah ! such are to be pitied. They lose,—if not all,—yet a great portion of their reward. What I wish to impress on myself and you, dear brethren, is this :—Let us look our difficulties and trials by all means in the face ; and then see, whether it is worth while to encounter them, and bear up against them ; and stand firm to the end. Oh, there I behold the Captain of salvation ! —and he holds out a great reward :

"I will give thee a crown of life!" Ah, brethren, we really do not think enough of this;—what honour His saints shall have;—how He delights in a faithful servant! Our Lord often speaks of such;—to show how he approves of them,—how precious they are in his eyes: "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous;" he watches over them for good. No good thing shall be wanting unto them. "Thy bread shall be given thee: thy water shall be sure."

When, in the conflict of faith Christ's servant obtains a special blessing, like Jacob; and a sign of his Lord's love and approbation;—for Jacob, after wrestling until the sun arose, received a new name;—such a token is more precious than any earthly favour or reward. But the reward comes at the end. Look at the striking contrast:—"faithful unto death,"—"a crown of life." Why is this emblem chosen? Because there is nothing in this world significant of greater honour, power and riches earthly, than a crown. It is a badge of royalty. The highest ambition of mortal man cannot aspire after more than this.

Yet after all, it is an empty honour. Studded as it may be, with diamonds and rubies; it is a perishable thing. At any rate, it will not survive the great conflagration. A crown does not shield the wearer of it from pain and sorrow. Many an anxious care has of late years been brooding within the brow encircled by a crown: and from how many a brow has it fallen, amidst revolutionary earthquakes! But the crown which Jesus promises to his faithful servant, is of a very different kind. It resembles that which he him-

self is wearing. It is an unfading, imperishable crown. Oh, to be thus publicly honoured!—to be an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ! After a comparatively short warfare, to be thus rewarded!—This is good, hopeful news. This is what made Paul rejoice in the prospect of martyrdom: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." He does not speak of death at all: he only says, "my departure is at hand." The fact is,—the sight of the crown,—so bright, so glorious,—made him forget death and all trials:—"I have done with them. I go to receive my inheritance." And was this indeed to be a reality? Was the poor, ill-treated, despised, and persecuted man,—the father of the humble believers at Smyrna,—to be rewarded thus? Yes, Jesus said it; and it was so.

Oh, brethren, we must fix our eyes upon this: we must get a realizing view of it: we must cheer our drooping hearts, and warm our affections, by the sight of this glorious crown. "The labourer is worthy of his hire." A cup of cold water given in a prophet's name will not lose its reward; but a life devoted and spent in the service of Jesus, will be followed by the highest honours in heaven. That believer, who in faithfulness most resembles his Master, will have a place nearest to him, in yonder realms of bliss. When self is mortified; and love and humility and self-consecration, are seen to be the prominent features,—oh, how bright will his garments shine there! To such a one, the Master of the house will say, "Friend, come up hither;—from the lowest to the highest place."

Is not the Son of man presented to us as our pattern of imitation? Through the deepest depth of humiliation and sorrow, he passed on earth: the cup of affliction he drank patiently; and finished the stupendous work of man's redemption: therefore God has highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. The prophets and apostles of our Lord,—the noble army of martyrs,—our younger brethren too—men who have kept the faith and have but of late years entered the rest, and are now before the throne,—such as Henry Martyn, Schwartz, and many of humbler note, but kindred piety, faithfulness and zeal—all call upon us, "Be thou faithful unto death."

Soon we too shall have done with our labours and trials. Yes, dear brethren, I sometimes feel as if I should very soon have done with mine. I feel as on the very borders of the heavenly Canaan. The great thing is to end well. A faithful servant need not fear when his Master calleth him. He is ready to obey the summons. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace."

Go, labour on; thy hands are weak,
Thy knees are faint, thy soul cast down;—
Yet falter not;—the prize is near,
The throne, the kingdom and the crown.
Toil on, toil on; thou soon shalt find,
For labour, rest; for exile, home;
Soon shalt thou hear the Bridegroom's voice,
The midnight peal,—Behold I come.

I COME QUICKLY.

Rev. xxii. 20.*

He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so; come, Lord Jesus.

THIS is the last sentence of the revealed word of God; and truly, it is a conclusion worthy of a divine revelation, and also fully in harmony with its contents and its main object. The coming of the Lord will be the winding up of the history of the world; it will place every thing in its right position; it will open the fulness of eternal glory to God's faithful people, and it will finally settle the wretched fate of the impenitent sinner.

In directing your devout attention to this solemn event, I would enter upon the subject with the earnest prayer, that the Spirit of God may enable us to distinguish and feel the practical obligations it presents to the Christian, and to act accordingly. We consider—

I. THE DECLARATION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

II. THE RESPONSE OF THE CHURCH.

I. *The declaration of the Lord Jesus;*—"Surely I come quickly." The second Advent of Christ is frequently mentioned in the Scriptures. We lately re-

* Preached at St. James's Church, Calcutta, on the evening of Sunday, February 29th, 1852. On the following morning, the Preacher entered into his heavenly rest;—"absent from the Body —present with the LORD."

membered the great and joyful event of His first coming in the flesh, that wonderful and mysterious fact of the incarnation of God. The Son of God sojourned for a while with man, to accomplish the work of his redemption. The object of His first coming was, to *suffer and die;* the object of His second coming is, to *reign and triumph*. Our text, with many others, teaches us to look forward to it: "Surely, I come quickly." The angels, who were present, when he ascended into heaven, told the astonished disciples, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven." In this last chapter of the Revelation, our Lord solemnly declares the event, not less than three times; viz. in the seventh, twelfth and nineteenth verses. Twice he says, "Behold, I come quickly!"—clearly with a view, to strike the attention of every reader of this Holy Book; and to direct the mind to the momentous importance of it: and in the words of the text, he says, "Surely, I come quickly;—you may rely upon it;—it will be so. I have said it, and it will come to pass. Remember it; and let no earthly concerns draw you away, or tempt you to lose sight of it."

Now, my brethren, as a general assertion, this word is addressed to all without distinction, whether friend or foe, Christian or unbeliever; and doubtless, every human being is concerned in it. If Christ is, what he declared himself to be,—the Son of God, yea, God himself;—man, a responsible being, cannot listen to this declaration without serious concern. We some-

times read of the stir and sensation which is caused, when a sovereign visits a portion of his dominions; and the costly preparations which are made for the reception of the royal guest: but how insignificant is such an event compared with that, which is here brought to our notice!

"Behold, he cometh with clouds!" The fact is too little realized and regarded by us,—that such an event will happen before our eyes; that the same Jesus who was born at Bethlehem, who suffered under Pontius Pilate, and rose triumphant from the dead,—whose history we read in the Gospel, and concerning whose character and doctrine, many in our days fancy, they may believe or disbelieve as much or as little as they think proper,—that He will once more appear on earth. Let me propose the simple question:—What feelings engage your hearts, when you think on the subject? Is it joy and hope, or fear and dread?—or something undefined—you know not what, just because you have not hitherto given the subject that serious and full consideration, which it deserves? If so, the title you bear is false: you are no good subjects of the King. These are times when Christians should become decided.

But we return to the special object of his second coming, which is to *reign*. "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints!" "I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

The book of Psalms is replete with prophetic allusions to this glorious period; and so with other

scriptures. These prophecies in many instances lead us to conclude; that, when this reign is to be established, a time of general peace and happiness will prevail on the earth; that Satan's influence will be removed: he will be shut up in the bottomless pit; war will be unknown; men "shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks." Holiness, righteousness and love will be the great principles influencing men in this blessed reign. The earth will present a scene of prosperity and happiness; such as was never witnessed before; but such as it would have done, if man had not transgressed in Paradise. Such are the descriptions of the Millennial glory. And it is believed by many, that this time is near at hand; that after the great final struggle, which appears now to be preparing in Europe,—a fearful one, but not of long duration,—that blessed period will be ushered in. What a happy time that will be!

But my text evidently points forward to the last and final period which will be followed immediately by the last judgment; for the last chapter speaks of the new heaven and the new earth; and a perfectly sinless state. I therefore would direct your attention to the second point:—The coming of Christ will be the time of the *final and eternal reward.*

Read what glorious promises he has left to his people on this great point. Oh, if we could but realize them in a measure, ours would be the feeling, which Christ desired should be their portion: "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven."

The true Church has ever been a suffering Church. God's children are down, and the world is up. How general is it, that the good and humble are slighted and despised, and those who are exalted and great are held in high esteem? The dragon and the beast will continue to persecute the woman with the man-child, until the time foretold be fulfilled. But this much-desired time *will come*. Amidst these woes of persecution and sufferings, through which the Church is passing; a process of assimilation is going on, the result of which is glorious beyond calculation. The bride must be assimilated to the Bridegroom: and this is accomplished through suffering. "If we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together." The scales will be turned at last, in favour of God's faithful people. A labourer is worthy of his hire. "Behold, I come quickly, to give every man according to his works."

Some have their reward here;—the reward of sin and unbelief—the short-lived enjoyment of what they lived and laboured for:—as it is said of Dives;—"Thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things." Our reward is not here. Thank God, it is not. We cannot be satisfied with such a portion. We look for something better. The regenerate soul labours and groans for the crown of life, for the Father's house, for the immediate presence of Jesus. We long to join the throng before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; who sing one great harmonious melody: "Salvation

to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb!" Listen, ye who love him, to what he has promised—we shall reign with him,—we shall see him,—we shall be like him. This is cheering news to the suffering, bowed down believer. Wherefore let us comfort one another with these words.

We notice a third object of His second coming. Christ will come to '*execute judgment*:' for he is Creator, King and Lord; and he has numbers of rebellious subjects, who say,—"We will not, that this man reign over us." The world is dealing with Christ, exactly as the Jews did of old. They hate him, despise him, cast him out of house and heart; and some would crucify him again, if they could; whereas the more decent and gentle pay him a courteous compliment, to save appearances, while they hesitate not to disregard the laws of his kingdom; nor are their affections touched by his kindness. Now, since our King desires reality and truth, and hates insincerity and hollow professions; it is clear that these also will be numbered among the rebels. Open hostility,—a spirit of infidelity,—is a dreadful thing: it is a peculiar sign of the times, and doubtless will increase more and more: but the mere external regard to religion is not much better.

There is no *property* so true, so real and indisputable, as that of creation. If a man invents an instrument and prepares, himself, all the different parts of it; who can dispute, that it is his absolute property? And in a much higher sense is man the property of God. He

not only made that wonderful machine of body and soul; but he made it out of nothing: and its very existence and operation depends on his constant supervision and care. Without that care, it would be destroyed in a moment. And this poor dependant creature, man, dares to say, he is not responsible to his Maker: he hopes no judgment-day will come. The word, the promises, the clearest evidences of Divine truth, are disputed away, and not acted upon.

Oh, how dreadful will be the scene; when the majestic appearance of the Lord will sweep away all delusions and every refuge of lies, and show the unbeliever and the easy-going, Gospel-proof, nominal Christian, that Christ is God; and that He is Judge of the living and dead! Let me allude but to one single passage to illustrate the awful fact. 2 Thess. i. 7—10. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

My hearers, are you converted characters, reconciled with God? or are you not? If you are not; should you not tremble in reading such a declaration, and fear to lie down this night on your bed and close your eyes, when you know not, if that event may not overtake you? and should you not now go and fall at the feet of the King, to find pardon and peace while the day of salvation is at hand? The certainty of this

coming, has been solemnly declared by the Lord himself: "Surely, I come quickly! Amen."

II. We proceed now to *the response of the Church*:—"*Even so; come, Lord Jesus!*" There is something very elevating and cheering in this sacred echo, that rises from earth to heaven; proving, that there is a corresponding feeling in the hearts of some here below. It lives and moves in those few and little ones, who have chosen the Lord for their portion and inheritance. Our text has respect chiefly to the brighter portion of the event predicted; viz. His coming for the salvation of His own people. His call is made in the way of sweet assurance:—"I know where you are,—what you do,—and what you have to suffer—for my name's sake. I remember you constantly: my heart,—my love—is with you. Wait a little longer: let patience have its perfect work: I come quickly."

Such is the voice of the Bridegroom: and who would not, with John, "rejoice greatly, because of the Bridegroom's voice?" I love to dwell on this beautiful simile. It opens so fully the heart,—the infinite love,—of Christ to his own people. A much esteemed minister said: "It requires a high degree of spirituality and advancement in the Christian life, for a man to believe the great love of Christ to his own people:"—therefore, I feel the importance that—in order to strengthen my faith, and to enable me to see deeper into this unfathomable ocean of Divine love,—I should give a fuller consideration to such words and

promises as lead me to see into the heart of Jesus. The Lord and Bridegroom calls from above. The Bride responds willingly, joyfully; expressing her longing desire, soon to behold the beloved of her heart. What else can you expect from a soul, which has been brought into spiritual communion with him? The bond is indissoluble: the union is eternal. Spiritual love is of heavenly origin; for "God is love." This holy fire has been kindled in her by the Spirit from above; therefore, "the Spirit and the Bride say, come." The soul regenerated, sanctified, delivered from the power of sin and self, has an ardent, an unquenchable desire to be free from the service,—the subjugation,—to the creature; and to be with Christ. Read how that desire was working, heaving up as it were in the mind of the Apostle. Romans viii. 24. "We groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." And again, 2 Cor. v. 4, 8. "We that are in this tabernacle, do groan, being burdened,—that mortality might be swallowed up of life." "We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord."

My brethren, deeply fallen as man is; there is still left in every soul a remnant of this desire. He longs,—though often unconscious as to the cause of it, yet he longs,—after God, his Divine origin. The heathen has it: the lowest of them shows it. It is because man has been created in the likeness of God. The deepest traces of it have not been extinguished.

In the bride,—the soul sanctified by grace,—this

desire has been developed to full consciousness: for she knows Him "as the fairest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely." She can feel and appreciate, what great things—what a glorious redemption—he has wrought for her. "Oh that I might soon behold his face!" This is her daily prayer. And there is great power in such prayer: and when all the whole body join in the cry—"Even so, come Lord Jesus!" it will be heard.

When our path through life is beset with trials; here is consolation of a substantial kind. With this hope, tribulation cannot really injure: it will only increase the desire, soon to be with the Lord. On the other hand, when we are at ease; and prosperity smiles on our paths; it is, after all, but very imperfect and shortlived. Jesus only can make the happiness of his people perfect.

"Come soon, Lord Jesus." This has been the prayerful aspiration of the Church, the bride of the Lamb, for eighteen hundred years past; because he has instructed her thus to cry. "Let him that heareth say, come." It is his delight to hear her, whom he loved unto death, give utterance to her earnest desire in the fullest manner. Thus Jesus is glorified; her heavenly affections are developed; and she is coming into a state of preparedness for the great day of his final triumph.

My brethren, if we study the signs of the time;—when we hear, with every returning news, how that the political and religious institutions of Europe are

shaking to the foundation, and showing increasing marks of decay and approaching dissolution; I would ask;—what feelings, and what desires must this critical state of things raise in the believer's heart? Surely no other but this: "Even so, come Lord Jesus." We feel, this is not our home,—we have not our city here: it is too old and worn and wearisome: we long for heaven. Come—come soon, Lord Jesus!

Allow me then, my brethren, by way of application, to enforce the words which stand a few verses before my text; because they are in close connection with it: "*Let him that heareth say, Come!*" This is the invitation from our exalted Lord to all. If you still want a fuller motive to it; I would say,—Read the two last chapters of this book of Revelation,—read them calmly and with prayer. The Spirit will give you an entrance, and shew you, what a glorious place heaven is. If you need a stimulus for action,—an incitement to prayer; I know not a more powerful agent.

But this prayer for the revelation of Jesus Christ from heaven, implies *holy affections;*—a mind versed in heavenly things. Where the mind is pre-occupied,—where it has never been trained to contemplate so sublime and great a subject,—where it has been debased, lowered, defiled by constant contact with a sinful world,—it cannot be fit for uttering such a prayer. In truth, you might as well expect to find a spring of clear water, bubbling out in one of the muddy tanks and puddles around us, as for such a mind to rise in holy aspirations after God.

To be enabled to join in this prayer, also presupposes *deadness to the world.* The old man with his lusts and desires must first be put off, before the new man can be put on. There must be a will and a decision, to depart from the principles of Babylon, —from every thing that hinders the development of spiritual life in the soul.

Now the earnest call upon the Church shows, that there is not in all her members that habitual vigilance and prayerfulness; yes, and that it is very defective in many of those who know and love the Lord. A serious consideration this! How solemnly is this sad state pointed out by our Saviour in the parable of the virgins! Five of them were foolish. They had vessels and lamps: but there was no oil in their vessels. The profession of faith,—the form of religion,—they had: but the life in the soul,—the spirituality,—the self-consecration and devotedness to Christ,—was wanting. This drowsiness,—this resting in mere formality,—this dangerous slumber,—is pointed out in the same parable, as prevailing, previous to the coming of the Lord. When the Bridegroom tarried, "they all slumbered and slept:" and I do believe, this warning applies eminently to our days. We have little or no oil in our vessels. Our Lord wants watchful people; who are doing and not talking; diligent about their Master's business, and not studying their ease and comfort. Oh, that it were in my power to stir you and myself up to this holy duty. "Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober."

What I desire lastly to impress upon you, dear hearers, as a clear inference of the text, is this: To become an heir of heaven,—requires a mind, a heart prepared for it. And this preparation must be made here. Do not rest satisfied in delusive hopes,—"I hope I shall be saved." Do not persuade yourselves of that being a saving faith, which,—when considered in the real light,—is nothing else but courteous regard to the form of religion. If Christ is not desired,—if his word is not embraced and loved,—if the heart is not changed and sanctified,—it is not the saving faith, but a spurious counterfeit. I well know, how slow and dull we are to bestir ourselves and be diligent. I well know, how ready and willing our corrupt self is, to do anything rather than pray—to go anywhere else but to Christ the fountain. I am fully aware, of the struggle and conflict it costs, to follow the better feeling, and to conquer the old carnal grovelling disposition that is within. But conquered it must be: and forward we must go:—if we hope that Christ will own us as his people, in the day of His glorious appearance. There is enough for encouragement, if we are sincere and decided. There is a voice of truth within you. Listen to it: follow it. If you cannot walk along briskly at once; creep slowly;—at any rate, go forward:—only, do not sit still. If you cannot pray in flowing effusions of the heart; use but few words, and follow the direction of my text in crying, "Come, Lord Jesus." If you call and call again, that internal desire will be developed. You will find an interest in His word;

and the time will soon come, when it will be your soul's delight to join the Church militant, with the fulness of your heart, in saying, "Come soon, Lord Jesus."

May the Lord dispose us all so to do; and may the Holy Spirit bless this feeble testimony to each here present,—to assist you in following his own injunction, given in infinite mercy,—to render us fit and worthy to share in Christ's glory, at the great day of His revelation!

THE END.

NOTICE.

It is in contemplation to publish an extended Memoir of the Rev. J. J. Weitbrecht, next spring in England, and any friends desirous of taking copies, are requested to forward their names to Mrs. Weitbrecht, care of Rev. G. G. Cuthbert, *Mission Row, Calcutta.*